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The undersigned hereby certify that they have read and recommend to the School of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Honorable Frank Oliver", submitted by William S. Waddell, B.A., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Professor

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Professor

April, 1950.

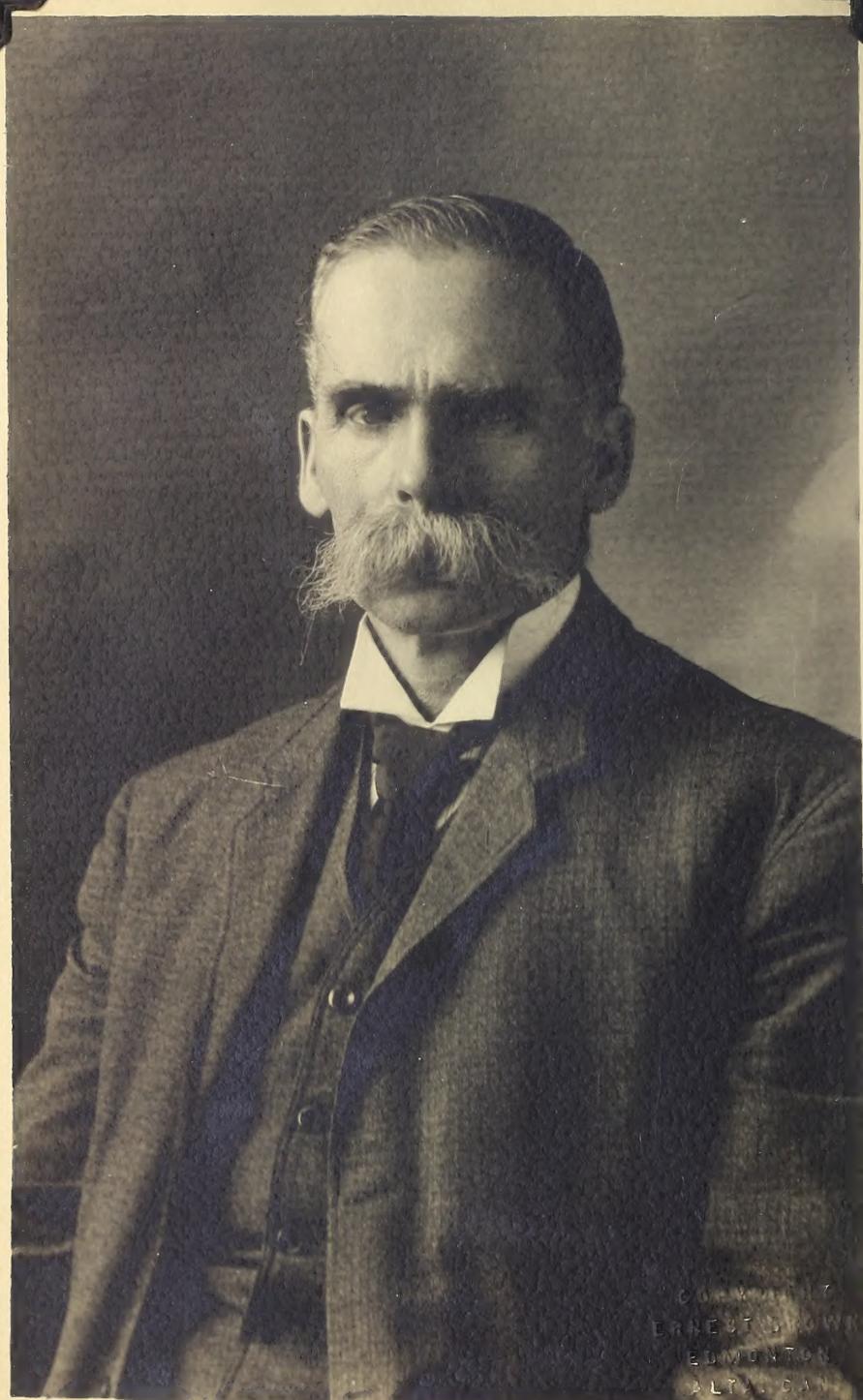
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Hon. Frank Oliver

THE HONORABLE FRANK OLIVER

A Thesis

Submitted to

The Department of History

University of Alberta

in

a Programme Leading to the Degree of Master of Arts

by

William S. Waddell B.A.

v. I

Edmonton, Alberta

March, 1950.

FOREWORD

The Hon. Frank Oliver was fifty-one years of age when he became Sir Wilfred Laurier's Minister of the Interior in 1905. His life during these fifty-one years, and particularly his influence as newspaperman and legislative representative upon the development of the Canadian North West, is the subject of this thesis.

As Minister during the Laurier régime he left an indelible mark upon the Department of the Interior. His policies, reflecting the personal philosophy and the system of political principles matured during his years as pioneer newspaperman and crusading exponent of North West rights, were the logical expression of an independent and statesmanlike outlook on public affairs. He gave a new direction to Canadian immigration policy and effected a more liberal and efficient administration of Canada's western public domain.

Frank Oliver's life down to 1905 was a period not of origins only, but of outstanding accomplishment. As an influential critic of federal inertia and mismanagement in Territorial administration, as a public-spirited citizen, and as a constructive legislator, he made far-reaching

contributions to the growth of the North West. From the viewpoint both of origins and attainments, the importance of this period to an understanding of his career as a whole justifies, I believe, the division of the topic which has been made in the planning of this thesis. Oliver's public life extended over the span of half a century. I have considered it advisable, in a paper of necessarily limited length, to expand the treatment of one portion of his life rather than to cover his entire career in less detail. However, in order to achieve some measure of perspective, I have found it necessary to do considerable research on the years subsequent to 1905. Little of the material acquired in this research is embodied directly in the thesis.

For obvious reasons no final attempt has been made in this survey to evaluate Oliver's stature as a newspaperman, legislator, administrator and citizen. Such a final evaluation would necessitate the treatment of his career as a whole, and a more complete and exhaustive study than is here set forth.

This thesis pretends to be no more than a reasonably documented examination of Frank Oliver as a public figure. Sources are made evident in the footnotes. Little if any use has been made of information and opinions secured from Oliver's contemporaries. The personal reminiscence, while

valuable in furnishing background and color for a "full-dress" biography, and of some importance in directing the attention of the investigator in his quest for facts, has been found to have strictly limited use and validity in a paper such as this. The reader will miss the inclusion of those details of family life, and of personal interest and habit, which distinguish "private" from "public" life, and which have their proper place in a work at once more personal and more pretentious than this survey claims to be.

For permitting me access to newspaper files and numerous books of reference, I wish to thank the Librarian and staff of the Alberta Provincial Library. The proprietors of the Edmonton Bulletin Publishing Co. kindly permitted me to refer to certain of their files of the Edmonton Bulletin which otherwise would have been unavailable to me. To Professor Morden H. Long, Head of the Department of History, University of Alberta, and to Professor L.G. Thomas, Department of History, University of Alberta, I extend my sincere thanks for the advice and encouragement which they rendered me in the preparation of this thesis.

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THE HONORABLE FRANK OLIVER

Chapter 1 Early Life

By the middle of the nineteenth century many of the forces and conditions which were ultimately to bring about Canadian confederation could already be discerned. Not the least of these was the problem of the West- the "Canada Irredenta" of that period. To the statesmen of the confederation era belongs the credit for the acquisition of the West from the Hudson's Bay Company, and for the solution of the immediate problems incident to its transfer to the new Dominion. But the credit for its subsequent development must be largely shared with men of a later generation - men who actually lived in its frontier settlements, who knew at first hand the difficulties peculiar to its social, political and economic life, and who strove, with the tenacity and courage of the true pioneer, to understand and solve its challenging problems. Of these men none is more worthy of recognition than the Hon. Frank Oliver of Edmonton, whose long and colorful career as newspaperman, politician and pioneer citizen has left a deep and distinctive mark on the history of the Canadian West.

On the 9th of September, 1853, with the currents soon to

set full flood toward confederation and the birth of the new West, Frank Oliver was born near the Upper Canadian village of Brampton, some twenty miles west of Toronto. His family, of Irish and English descent, farmed in the township of Chinguacousy, and his early years were spent on his father's farm. Later, while attending the high school in Brampton, he combined his studies with an apprenticeship in the printing establishment of the local weekly paper. Meanwhile his mother died and his father married again. An estrangement developed between father and son. Cutting short his experience as "printer's devil", young Frank severed ties with his family and set out to make his own way.

To the lad of ambition and venturesome spirit the city appeared to have the most to offer, and the first stage of what was to prove a long and eventful journey brought him to Toronto, the erstwhile "Muddy York", which by now had become the metropolitan capital of Ontario. His printing apprenticeship now served him well, and in the early years of the young Dominion, while the Conservative government of Sir John A. Macdonald was debating terms for the construction of the first transcontinental railway, and was momentarily shaken by the Métis uprising in Red River, he found employment in the composing rooms of the Toronto Globe. (1)

(1) The Edmonton Bulletin, April 7, 1905 and April 1, 1933. Founded by Frank Oliver in Edmonton, Dec. 6, 1880 as "The Bulletin".

Although still young in years, Frank Oliver was alert, serious-minded and already sensitive to the political forces of his day. While it would be unwise to assume too much from his association with George Brown and the Grits, certain influences and parallels are almost unmistakable. The Clear Grits were the party of the frontier in Canadian politics. From the frontier they drew their inspiration, and at various times they, and therefore George Brown and the Globe, had waged the battle for responsible government, attacked the clergy reserves, denounced the eastern monopoly of the Grand Trunk Railway and the western monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company, and advocated a policy of westward expansion involving cheap land and immigration. Each of these issues was to have its counterpart in the history of the North West: the struggle for responsible government in the Territories, the "land lock" constituted by the railway land grants and the colonization companies, the alleged monopoly of the C.P.R., and the retarding influences of Dominion lands policy on western immigration. In the later struggles centering on these North West problems, Frank Oliver was destined to play an important and at times decisive part, and to reveal on many occasions, whether in a scathing editorial in the columns of the Edmonton Bulletin or in fiery invective on the floor of the North West Assembly or the House of Commons, a clear kinship with the

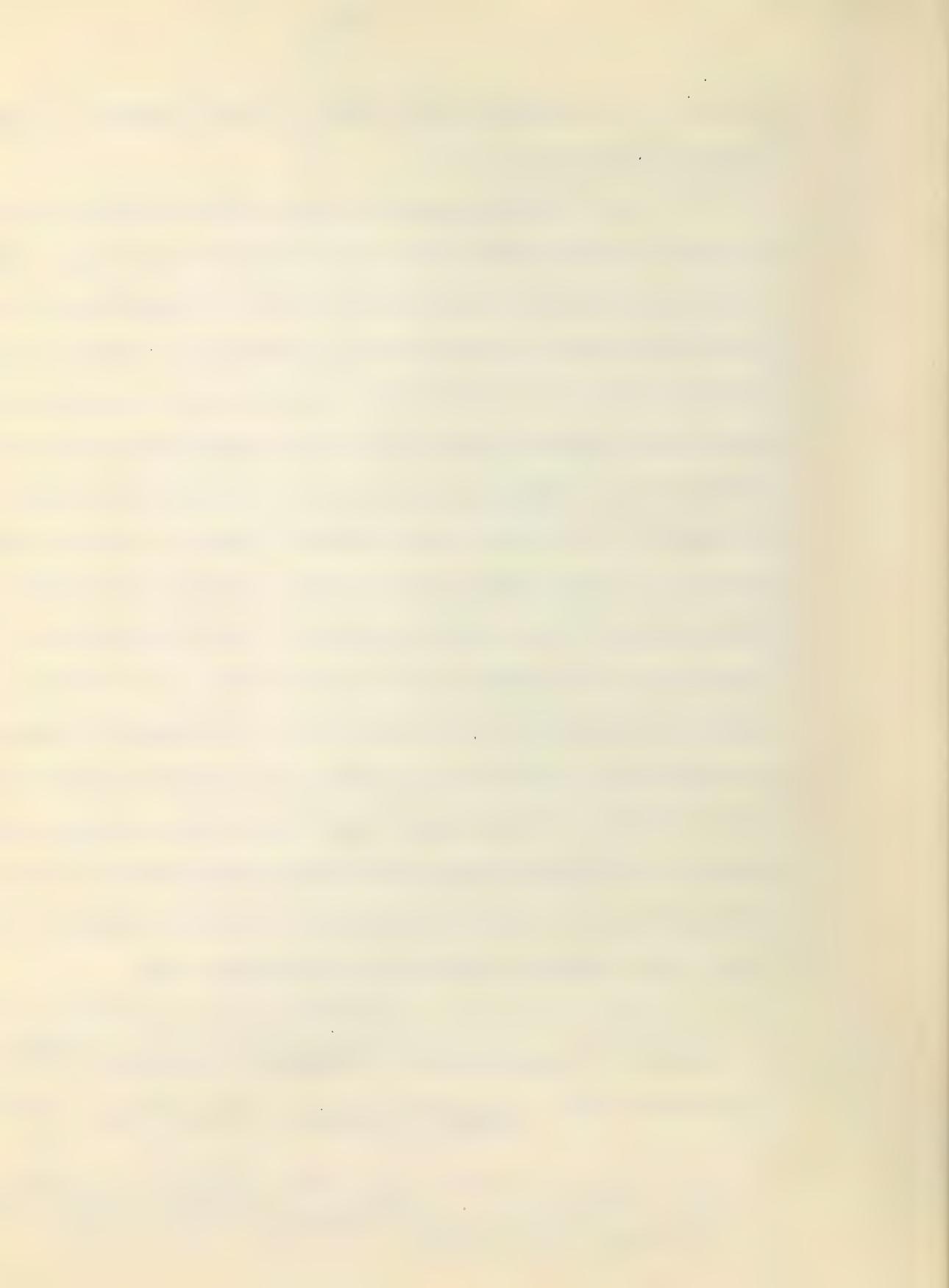
political philosophy of the great liberal editor of the Toronton Globe. (2)

The West, largely because of the troubles at Red River, was much in the public eye in the early 'seventies. The execution of Scott, with its aftermath of racial and religious bitterness, and the peculiar relations between "John A" and the arch-rebel Riel formed inexhaustible subjects of public speculation and dispute. William McDougall, former political and editorial associate of George Brown, but now disowned by the Grits, had returned from his ill-starred mission as first Lieutenant-Governor of the North West, and finding himself not only unsupported but abandoned by Sir John and his government, was "using much ink in seeking to defend and justify his course." (3) Encouraged by government pamphlets and by the promises of private promoters, a small stream of immigration was flowing into the Red River area over the Dawson Road and the American Route, and new communities were being established in ever-widening circles beyond the original Red River settlements. (4)

(2) See Oliver's tribute to George Brown in his article on Laurier's assumption of the party leadership. *Infra* p. 154.

(3) Hammond, M.O. Confederation and Its Leaders Toronto 1916 p. 92.

(4) Morton, A.S. "History of Prairie Settlement" in Morton, A.S. and Martin, C. History of Prairie Settlement and "Dominion Lands" Policy Toronto 1938 p. 57.



From the vantage point of a newspaper office and its associations the young printer doubtless talked with men who had participated directly or otherwise in the stirring affairs of the newly acquired West, and had become impressed with its possibilities. Judging from his subsequent career he was not one to confine himself to second hand experience of those situations which interested him. At any rate, three years after the Riel Rebellion had run its course, and while the insatiable public appetite was being regaled with the details of the Pacific Scandal, Frank Oliver gave up his position with the Toronto Globe and made the long and arduous journey west to the Red River. (5) Arriving in Winnipeg, the growing commercial centre of the region, but still little more than a frontier village of scattered wooden buildings sprawled on wide, muddy streets near the walls of Fort Garry, he took a job in the office of the Manitoba Free Press. Like the community which it served, the Free Press was in its raw infancy, and the new employee "set all the ads, and made up the forms and fed the press of both daily and weekly." (6)

During his three years with "The Press" he rose to become foreman of the composing room, but meanwhile the promise

(5) Morton, op. cit., p. 46 and p. 51 ff. for the Dawson Road and the American Route.

(6) Edmonton Bulletin, April 1, 1933.

which a growing Winnipeg had held in 1873 remained unfulfilled. From the very year of his arrival annual plagues of grasshoppers destroyed the crops, creating widespread privation among the settlers and checking immigration. Business fell off rapidly and the general commercial depression of 1876 brought virtual stagnation. In this situation many of the more recent comers, and particularly those not already bound too closely to their land, returned East. Some remained, however, "to ride out the depression", and a few more daring spirits like Frank Oliver and J.A. McDougall (years later the mayor of Edmonton) saw in the far West the new land of opportunity. (7)

There was indeed much in the life of the Winnipeg of that day to stir the imagination of the footloose and the adventurous. In the streets of the village the last generation of buffalo hunters mingled with Canadian and Yankee merchants, itinerant traders, freighters, sober Scottish settlers and newly arrived immigrants. Trappers and fur traders from the far north and west still came down for the spring trading, and full-blooded Indians of the plains pitched their

(7) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 26, 1908. Oliver in a public speech at the Thistle Rink: "The chairman, your mayor (Mr. McDougall) adventured west in the early days looking for the sunset, and we happened to take the same notion in the same year. We came to the decision that Edmonton was the place which was particularly marked by the star of Empire."

teepees under the walls of Fort Garry and plagued the Governor with their importunities. From here, in 1874, Major Walsh's force set out to join the great march of the newly formed North West Mounted Police across the plains and through the Cypress Hills to the valley of the Belly and the Little Bow. From here government survey parties fanned out over the vast reaches of the prairies seeking the most feasible route for the projected transcontinental railway, and from here the brigades of ox-drawn Red River carts set out on their interminable and tortuous journey to the outposts in the valleys of the Qu'Appelle, the Bow and the Saskatchewan.

In 1876, coincident with the depression in Red River, it was anticipated that the railway would follow the route suggested by surveyor Sanford Fleming: from Selkirk, Manitoba, westward by way of the Upper Saskatchewan country and through the Yellowhead Pass. (8) So that spring Frank Oliver left the Free Press and joined the minor "rush" into the North West. Investing his savings in a small freighting outfit, he travelled west across the plains with an ox-cart brigade bound for a sawmill at Whitemud, some fifty miles upstream from Fort Edmonton on the North Saskatchewan River. (9)

(8) Morton History of Prairie Settlement Map p. 62.

(9) Edmonton Journal, April 1, 1933.

Reaching Edmonton after a journey of some three months "at the tail of his ox-cart" (10) he was greatly impressed by the tiny settlement nestled on the bench above the river. Throughout the late summer and the fall he remained in the district, trading and acquainting himself with the land. That winter he "hoofed it back to Winnipeg by dog train," (11) but the following summer he returned with his freight-laden ox-carts. For this remote district on the banks of the Saskatchewan was the place to which he was drawn as to home - "the place which was particularly marked by the star of Empire." (12)

(10) Edmonton Bulletin, April 14, 1905.

(11) Edmonton Bulletin, April 7, 1905. Quoting Ottawa Free Press.

(12) Supra, p. 6, n(7).

Chapter 2 The Founding of the Edmonton Bulletin

In the summer of 1795 the North West Company built a trading post, Fort Augustus, near the junction of the North Saskatchewan and Sturgeon rivers. Several months later the rival Hudson's Bay Company established Edmonton House on an adjacent site. Competition between the two companies rapidly depleted the immediate area of furs, and some time between 1801 and 1806 both posts were moved some twenty miles up the North Saskatchewan to the site of the present city of Edmonton. In 1810 Edmonton House and Fort Augustus were moved downstream to the fork of the North Saskatchewan and White Earth rivers, but three years later were moved back again.

There they continued to do business, side by side, until the union of 1821 brought the rival companies together, and Fort Augustus was abandoned. Edmonton House, or Fort Edmonton as it was later called, continued to thrive and became the headquarters of the great Saskatchewan district of the Hudson's Bay Company. The settlement that grew up around it developed into a city (Edmonton) and became the capital of the Province of Alberta. (1)

Located in one of the richest fur districts of the West,

(1) The Beaver Published Quarterly by the Hudson's Bay Company. Outfit 276, Sept., 1945. "The Founding of Fort Edmonton" - C. Parnell. pp. 3 and 4.

Morton, A.S. A History of the Canadian West Toronto. Morton makes frequent reference to Edmonton House and Fort Edmonton. See p. 954, Index, under heading "Edmonton House" for page references.

and on the margin of the great buffalo plains to the south and east, Fort Edmonton was for many years the trading centre of the Cree, the Mountain Stoney and the Blackfoot. Its position on the north bend of the Saskatchewan River made it, during the first half of the nineteenth century the breaking point for the great fur company's transcontinental traffic between Hudson Bay and the Pacific coast. "It stood at the eastern end of the 'traverse' to Fort Assiniboine, whence the outfits passed onwards to Lesser Slave Lake, to New Caledonia, and to the Columbia." (2) But "when trading vessels began to come 'around the Horn' to the west coast, that killed the transcontinental trade route of the Hudson's Bay Company and the glory of Edmonton departed for a time. American traders pushing up the Missouri by steamer to Benton drew away the Blackfeet trade; and the Plain Crees (sic) traded their robes at Carlton or Winnipeg so that the importance of Edmonton had seriously declined at the time of the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada in 1870 from what it had been during the period from say 1810 to 1860." (3)

(2) Morton, A.S. A History of the Canadian West p. 697.

(3) Oliver, Frank The Founding of Edmonton Recorded by the Historical Society of Alberta 1921 Pamphlet.

When Frank Oliver first came to Edmonton it was a mere village controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company, its few scattered buildings dominated by the Fort which stood on the bench below the site of the present parliament buildings. Of its population, numbering some two hundred and fifty souls including Indians, Oliver himself gave this description: "A few men from across the mountains who had been gold miners were now engaged in farming. A few others still worked gold from the sand bars. A few ex-employees of the Hudson's Bay Company had settled on the land. There was a considerable settlement of buffalo hunters at St. Albert, and the Mounted Police detachment at Fort Saskatchewan. (4) A few Ontario people who like myself had wandered West had decided that Edmonton was a desirable location to await railway development." (5) There were also, of course, the ever-present Indians encamped along the brow of the river hill which today overlooks Victoria Park. (6)

"The first night I slept in a house in this district," Oliver recounted years later, "the owner and his wife sat down to a dinner of boiled muskrats and 'lady finger' (small)

(4) Established in 1874-5 by Col. Jarvis, N.W.M.P.

(5) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

(6) Oliver, Frank The Indian Drum Published by Queen's University, Kingston, Canada, 1929.
Copied by the Historical Society of Alberta. Pamphlet.

potatoes. The staple food of the country was buffalo meat and whitefish. The nearest railhead was in Minnesota." (7) Wheat flour was a luxury - fifteen to twenty-five dollars a ninety-six pound bag. So little progress had as yet been made in raising grains that "the police horses at Fort Saskatchewan were fed on oats grown at Sun River, Montana, five hundred miles away, and brought in across country by ox-team." (8)

Yet despite the isolation and the primitive conditions these were optimistic years for Edmonton. Great hopes were held for the agricultural possibilities of the district, and the survey of the projected Yellowhead route had already been pushed west, and skirting south of the Beaver Hills, passed just south of Edmonton across the site of the present town of Leduc. High optimism prevailed at the prospect of being, within a few years, but a few miles off the main line of the first transcontinental railway.

Following his first trip of 1876 Frank Oliver established himself as a trader in Edmonton, "hauling his goods by Red River cart with an ox-team from Winnipeg in the summer, and running opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company in the winter." (9) The traders usually travelled in brigades and

(7) Edmonton Journal, April 1, 1933.

(8) Ibid

(9) Edmonton Bulletin, April 1, 1933.

"left Edmonton each spring when the grass turned green in April, journeyed the thousand leisurely miles to Winnipeg, secured their loads and reached Edmonton again after the ice had begun to form in the creeks in October." (10) There was always time, as they crawled and jolted west over the old Battleford Trail, to pull up occasionally and do a bit of trading with Indians or wayfarers encountered on the road.

In the summer of 1878 Oliver bought what he claimed was the first town lot to be sold in Edmonton. He purchased it from Colin Fraser, the original owner of River Lot Ten, for twenty-five dollars. (11) On this property, the site of the present-day Bulletin office, he built his log store, the first place of business in the settlement outside of the Hudson's Bay Post. (12) The erection of the store did not, of course, interfere with his annual trips to Winnipeg; rather it centralized his trading activities and enlarged the scale of his operations. During the next few years his store business prospered. But events were already conspiring to draw his attention and energies away from trade, and direct them back into the field in which he had received his early training - printing.

(10) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930. Reminiscence by William Bleasdell Cameron.

(11) Oliver, Frank The Founding of Edmonton

(12) This ancient building now occupies a place as Old Timers' Centre at the Edmonton Exhibition Grounds.

In the 'seventies the telegraph line had been extended from Winnipeg to Battleford ("Telegraph Crossing") and thence to a terminus where Leduc now stands on the Calgary Trail. In 1878 Alex Taylor, well known in later years as a pioneer Edmonton citizen, was the telegraph operator at Hay Lakes, about thirty-five miles south-easterly from the Fort. With the two-fold purpose of ending his unhappy position of isolation and of improving the service, Taylor suggested that the line be extended to Edmonton to meet the needs of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Police and the people of the village. There was plenty of unused wire stored at the Calgary Trail - more than enough to make possible the extension of the line to Edmonton. Sufficient money was collected from private subscriptions to proceed with the work, and the contractor for the completion of the main line supplied the wire and insulators free of charge. By the fall of 1879 Edmonton was in telegraphic communication with the outside world, the telegraphic office being located for the first winter in the carpenter shop of John Walter at the South Side ferry landing. (13) An arrangement was made by which a weekly news bulletin was forwarded over the wire from Winnipeg, the cost being met by private subscription. Alex

(13) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

The telegraph office was later transferred to a room in the Fort.

The old Walter house is still standing.

Taylor, by now the operator in Edmonton, received these weekly messages, and as they were written out in longhand and sent around to the subscribers they were called "bulletins". (14) However, this method of disseminating the news was rather tedious and inadequate at best, and when telegrapher Taylor became acquainted with printer Oliver an idea was born, simple enough in its self, but destined to be the beginning of an important enterprise. It was decided to obtain a small press and some paper with which, by virtue of his previous experience in that line, Oliver could print off the weekly "bulletins" coming in over the wire to Taylor.

Accordingly, Frank Oliver located a miniature press advertised for sale in Philadelphia. (15) He ordered it, the seller shipped it out to Winnipeg in the spring of 1880, and there he picked it up during his annual freighting trip of that summer. It was not a very pretentious affair: "Two

(14) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 10, 1909. "Newspaper Reminiscences" by Frank Oliver.

(15) This is my interpretation of the following statement by "Janey Canuck" in the Edmonton Bulletin, June 30, 1927: "Accordingly a miniature press was purchased in Philadelphia by Mr. Oliver in reply to an advertisement." There is no ambiguity as to the seller's having shipped the press to Winnipeg where Oliver picked it up.

full cases of very lean non pareil (6 point) type and a toy press. The platen of the press was about eight by ten inches. The inking was by hand. Included was a small quantity of newsprint. The whole thing weighed about two hundred pounds" (16) and cost around twenty dollars. (17)

By the time Oliver had unloaded the press outfit at his store in Edmonton the original idea had grown, and after some discussion the prospective partners resolved to embark on a venture rather more enterprising than that first considered. They decided, in addition to the weekly Winnipeg wire, to include the local news - "in fact to publish a small newspaper under the firm name of Oliver and Taylor."

(18)

This decision having been made, the problem of a printing office presented itself. Oliver's store was too small and crowded, and his living quarters above the store were deemed unsuitable. At this juncture Mr. Donald Ross, the proprietor of the Edmonton Hotel, came to the assistance of "the firm" by the offer of the use of a small smokehouse adjoining his premises. Here the partners installed their

(16) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930. Oliver's own statement.

(17) Edmonton Journal, April 1, 1933.

(18) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

press. They then engaged the services of a printer by the name of Collins who was working a farm claim at Clover Bar a few miles east of the settlement.

Circumstances naturally suggested "The Bulletin" as an appropriate name for the paper, but now a fresh difficulty had to be met. There was no type of size suitable for the heading. (19) Taylor, however, proved himself a man of resource and "using a jackknife he carved the words "The Bulletin" on the end wood of a piece of well dried birch."

(20) This served quite adequately for the heading type; Taylor returned to his telegraph to get "the latest" from Winnipeg, Oliver hustled after the ads and local news, Collins set the type, and on December 6, 1880, the first issue of The Bulletin appeared in the Edmonton settlement.

Publication continued weekly until the following April, when printer Collins was due to return to work his claim and Frank Oliver to set out on his annual freighting trip to Winnipeg to replenish the stock of goods in his store. Accordingly, this notice appeared in the issue of April 14, 1881: "We are discontinuing publication on this date . . .

(19) In E.J. Walker Fortress North Toronto 1947, p. 400, John Oliver, Frank Oliver's son, is quoted as authority for the explanation that the large type was lost in the crossing of the South Saskatchewan River when Oliver was freighting the press West.

(20) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

and to those of our subscribers who think they have not had the worth of their money we can only say that they have at least had the best end of the bargain. Next fall we propose to issue The Bulletin in enlarged form, when we will make up to both subscribers and advertisers the number of issues still due." (21) At this time, too, Taylor decided to retire from the telegraph service to take up a river claim. "He disposed of his interest, leaving me in full control of an enterprise that, although it had not died, was in a condition of suspended animation." (22)

The summer of 1881 was an eventful one for the thriving proprietor of Frank Oliver's Store and The Bulletin. During his stay in Winnipeg he married Harriet Dunlop, daughter of Thomas Dunlop of Prairie Grove, Manitoba, and entered into a business partnership with his new brother-in-law, Alex Dunlop, an employee of the Free Press. Dunlop was to become co-proprietor of The Bulletin, and the understanding was that he should come out to Edmonton the following summer and take over the actual printing of the paper. Oliver was careful to include in his freight a quantity of new type and other equipment for the intended enlargement of The Bulletin

(21) Edmonton Bulletin, April 4, 1881.

(22) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

with its re-appearance in the fall. His young bride accompanied him on the return journey west, and one of his recollections of that trip is worth quoting:

I recall that as my wife and self slowly wended our way by heavily loaded ox-cart and wagon across the plains, hard driving parties with team and buckboard frequently passed us in a cloud of dust determined to beat the railway to Edmonton. The fact that Edmonton was 20 miles distant from the then surveyed line of railway meant nothing to them. That was in 1881. The rails of the C.N.R. reached Edmonton in 1905. They had beaten the westbound railway by a big margin. (23)

Oliver's marriage not only put an end to his freighting trips to Winnipeg, but made some re-organization of his business and living arrangements necessary. He and his wife took up residence in a building at the rear of the store and the printing office was established in the upper flat of the store building. A Mr. Ham was now telegrapher, and Mr. W.H. Ashley, later proprietor of a paper in Boissevain, Manitoba, was engaged as printer. The first issue of the revived Bulletin, enlarged and improved in set-up and coverage, appeared on October 29, 1881. From that date the publication of the paper has continued without interruption to the present day.

In the early summer of 1882, in accordance with the arrangement made the previous year, Alex Dunlop "arrived from

Winnipeg with his family by Hudson's Bay steamer and brought with him a half-medium Gordon press and an outfit of type necessary to the proper equipment of the office." (24) More space being needed for the new installation, "the plant was removed from the upper part of my building to a new one-storey building further east on Jasper Avenue." (25) The first issue of the new edition, again enlarged and improved, appeared on November 4, 1882.

Unfortunately for the new partnership, the spring of that year witnessed the collapse of the Edmonton land "boom" with results that are best described in Oliver's own words:

The collapse of the boom and the diversion of the railway in large measure broke the hopeful spirit that had hitherto prevailed in the town and surrounding country. My partner retired from the business and returned to Winnipeg, and I was left holding the bag. By this time my store business had pretty well died down so I gave it up altogether and moved the printing plant to the ground floor of the store building which for many years afterwards was the Bulletin office (26) I assumed full control in May, 1884. There followed a period of slow and lean years for the Bulletin as for the whole Edmonton district. . . . One year followed another with ever recurring sameness and corresponding disheartenment of the pioneers who had banked on the railway. During that period the Bulletin was a one-man paper. Sometimes I had a printer and sometimes not. It was a day of small - of very small things. At this distance of time I am of the opinion that the most useful work of the Bulletin's early career was done during that period. (27)

(24) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

(25) Ibid

(26) Site of the present-day Bulletin office.

(27) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

In these early years the Bulletin was truly a "miniature paper", in fact upon occasion the editor claimed for it the distinction of being "the world's smallest newspaper". The issues of Volume I were of four pages, each containing five by six inches of reading matter. The use of small, lean non pareil type and the absence of "cuts" or display matter of any kind created a solid, condensed page of print. The Bulletin never used the familiar "filler sheets", prepared elsewhere and supplied by contract, to augment its size. Oliver scorned to waste space with "ancient platitudes and hoary jokes", and even the efforts of the local poets and philosophers, of which a frontier community produces more than its share, found no place in the narrow columns of his paper.

The issues of Volume 2, which began on October 29, 1881, contained six by nine inches of reading matter per three-column page. The actual printing was now generally clearer, although at times the press refused to do justice to the contents. A further increase in page size was made possible by the use of the Gordon press in turning out Volume 3, and two pages of four narrow columns could be printed at one impression. The effect of solidity and condensation remained in the four-page paper, for small type without display was still used. With the introduction of Volume 3 the proprietor undertook job printing.

The birch wood heading "The Bulletin", carved by Alex Taylor, was used only for the first eleven issues of Volume I, that is until February 14, 1881. It was then replaced by a heading "Edmonton Bulletin" of plain, bold-faced type of somewhat smaller size, which was used for the remainder of Volume I. With the beginning of Volume 2 the name "Edmonton Bulletin" was retained, but appeared in a "fancy" scrolled type of rather original design. This heading, with a minor modification on November 4, 1882, continued in use for some years. (28)

The early Bulletin, "a wonder when it was first published at the far-off trading post of Edmonton" (29) and enthusiastically acclaimed by the local settlers, and even by the Winnipegers as the best little newspaper in the country, (30) records a vivid picture of pioneer days. (31) A reading of its columns constitutes a fascinating journey into the young West, and by no means the least rewarding feature of this journey is the acquaintance it affords with the colorful personality of the Bulletin's proprietor and editor.

- (28) This information is derived from actual examination of the early Edmonton Bulletin files.
- (29) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 6, 1906.
- (30) Edmonton Bulletin, April 7, 1905.
- (31) The Bulletin was the first newspaper to be published in what is now Alberta, the second in the N.W.T., and excluding B.C. papers, the third west of Winnipeg. It was preceded by a Portage La Prairie weekly and by the Saskatchewan Herald of Battleford.

In 1880, as a young man of twenty-seven, Frank Oliver appeared, in top boots, blue shirt and felt hat, as a typical western "broad-brim". And back of him he had, not only the knowledge of a trade - now being put to good use - but also the hardening and sharpening experiences of the pioneer. Newspaper work in Winnipeg, long and arduous journeys over the Battleford Trail, the associations and exigencies of a frontier trader - all had combined to give him a positive point of view, resourcefulness and an intimate understanding of the North West settler and his problems. He was not a big man, nor of what is commonly termed rugged physique, but "his wiry frame was the vehicle of a mind that was absolutely tireless," and as was to be proven time and again during the years to come, "of a will that never weakened and a spirit that did not falter at difficulties, misunderstandings or defeat." (32) "Compromise and doubts were alike foreign to his disposition" (33) and his transparent sincerity and forthright independence were at times disconcerting to those with whom he came in contact. With a certain breezy roughness of manner and speech he combined the moral earnestness of the Ontario "dour Grit". "The Bulletin," he

(32) Edmonton Bulletin, April 1, 1930.

(33) Ibid

said, "believes that the right is always the expedient," (34) and he called for men "bullheaded and prejudiced enough to believe that right is right and wrong is wrong absolutely."

(35) With a mind keenly alert to the practical, and with a consuming interest in political questions, he possessed a talent for picturesque invective and a vocabulary which for originality and force was perhaps, even in those days of uninhibited expression, unrivalled in the West. He was a man who not only considered but who called, "a spade, a spade".

(36)

When making reference, in later years, to the founding of the Bulletin, Oliver remarked, "For myself I am able to say that the crime was not premeditated." (37) But from statements made on various other occasions it is evident that the paper had not quite the casual beginning that this implies. It grew out of the needs of the North West and out of Frank Oliver's faith in the North West and its people. It had, of course, the obvious function of furnishing local and outside news to an isolated and news-hungry community. But the personality and aims of its editor prevented it from becoming

(34) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 7, 1885. Editorial policy.

(35) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 1, 1887. In reference to the Manitoba disallowance question.

(36) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 3, 1883.

(37) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

a mere local news sheet. It became, almost at once, a powerful influence on such public opinion as then existed throughout the North West, and the tireless and outspoken champion of the rights of the North West settler. "From the beginning of the Bulletin's existence the crisp, pointed paragraphs, dealing with the events of world interest and of local importance, made it one of the best journals in Canada." (38)

Frank Oliver made the Bulletin peculiarly his own. In its columns he set forth at length his political creed, his position on matters of local and general concern and his outspoken opinions on the characters and motives of his contemporaries. From the first he revealed all the basic ingredients of the philosophy, personal and political, which was to dominate his long and at times stormy career; and he made frequent reference to interests and pre-occupations which on many a future occasion were to challenge his energies and abilities.

In introducing Volume 2, after noting that special attention would be paid to matters relating to the North West, he said, "Our opinions in regard to subjects that may claim our attention will be expressed truthfully and fearlessly, with a single eye to the best interests of this western country."

(39) There is little reason to believe that he ever departed

(38) Edmonton Bulletin, April 7, 1905. Quoting Ottawa Free Press.

(39) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 29, 1881.

from the position implied in this statement. His stand on North West matters at this time was very significant, and may best be given in his own words:

In politics we claim to be at once reform, conservative and radical. Reform inasmuch as we desire to see all abuses of sound principles reformed, conservative in that we believe that all good principles should be adhered to, and radical because we wish to see all principles which are radically wrong, utterly uprooted.

As long as one part is made to bear more than its share of the burdens of the whole there can be no real union of feeling, and for this reason we oppose the principle by which the North West is made to bear almost the whole of the burden of the building and running of the C.P.R., the larger proportion of the burden of the National Policy, and to form through the instrumentality of colonization societies a bribery fund for the maintenance in power of one political party.

We will uphold the rights of the squatters at all times and against all comers to the best of our poor ability, hoping for the time when the right will triumph. (40)

In explaining to his subscribers why the Bulletin, even with the beginning of Volume 3, was being kept small in size, the proprietor made himself clear. Costs, he pointed out, were being kept down; and no very large investment being involved, the paper could maintain its position of independence - "that of not being under the influence or control of any person, clique or party other than the proprietors, and therefore able as well as willing to speak up for the public interest at all times and on all occasions." (41)

(40) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 4, 1882.

(41) Ibid

Many aspects of Frank Oliver's political career can be understood only by reference to his long adherence to the principle of independence or non-partisanship in politics. It is worthwhile here to note his vigorous stand on this principle, even during those years before he entered the field of active politics. "We support principles, not men," he stated, in commenting on the general elections of 1882.

(42) And further:

When any great cause is being fought out, it is sometimes necessary to sink minor differences in order to gain the end in which all are interested. But when a member altogether drops the interests of his constituents for those of his party, he becomes false to the trust imposed on him. The elective power is possessed by the people, not merely that the wishes of some party leader shall be carried out but that the wishes, the needs, the selfish interests of each portion of the country shall be represented, and its case argued by its representative in parliament, so that in legislation to be passed the greatest good may be done to the greatest number.

Government by party may have been a good thing at one time in Canada, and may be yet in the older provinces, but when it ties the hands or the tongues of the people of this new Canada from upholding what is right and denouncing what is wrong, from speaking of what is for or against the interests of this greater, and to be the most important, part of the country, especially at this time when legislation can affect it for either good or ill to such a great extent, it becomes a curse. (43)

His belief - or to put it more strongly, his faith - in political non-partisanship was closely allied to a rugged

(42) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 10, 1883.

(43) Edmonton Bulletin, April 28, 1883.

individualism of opinion and action which scorned to temporize, or to compromise in hope of personal gain. (44) He was a man of strong convictions, and a fearless fighter who revelled in disputation and conflict. He had a blunt way of sweeping aside what he considered to be fine-spun or irrelevant arguments and directing attention to the bare issue. A remark made years later in the House of Commons is characteristic. There had been widespread complaint among the settlers one winter regarding the quality of the coal-oil supplied by the Canadian branch of the Standard Oil Company to dealers in Manitoba and the North West. Charges were aired in the House of Commons and the opinion of the experts cited on tests that had been made of the oil. At an appropriate moment in the debate Oliver arose and observed succinctly: "We do not care so much about the flash test, or the gravity of the oil; what we do want to know is whether it gives light when it burns." (45) Frank Oliver might not always be right, but he always had a well considered opinion to express, and the means to make the weight of that opinion felt.

(44) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 10, 1909. Two incidents related at the convention of the Alberta and Eastern British Columbia Press Association illustrate this forcefully.

(45) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 28, 1902.

Chapter 3 Newspaperman and Citizen of the North West

The place of a newspaper in the life of a pioneer community is a very important one, and the influence which Frank Oliver and his Bulletin exercised upon the development of Edmonton, and in fact upon the whole North West, is almost incalculable. "He was himself the chief factor in guiding and inspiring the forces which shaped its destiny and assured its growth." (1) The Old Timers of Edmonton, many of them his personal friends, and some, no doubt, his political opponents, in recalling the growth of Edmonton from "a name on the map" to a flourishing city, paid him this tribute: "To you, more than to any other man, is the credit of this wonderful change to be attributed. In season, and at all times, you have ever by word of mouth and in the columns of the Bulletin championed the cause of the west, made known its advantages, and fought for its rights." (2)

The bane of the pioneer is isolation, and in that respect the position of Edmonton really improved but little in the four years following the day when Frank Oliver first unyoked his oxen under the walls of the Hudson's Bay Fort. When the

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, April 1, 1933.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, April 14, 1905. Old Timers' Address on the occasion of Oliver's appointment as Minister of the Interior in the Laurier Government.

first issue of the Bulletin came off the press the nearest railhead was at Winnipeg. The mail couriers from that point, using dog trains in winter and ponies in summer, arrived every three weeks and took three weeks on the way. Birtle was the most westerly settlement in Manitoba; and between Edmonton and Calgary, still a mere Police post without even the beginning of a village, there was not a house except that of the Indian instructor at Big Stone Creek. To the east there was not a house between Fort Saskatchewan and Battleford, a distance of 250 miles. The ranching industry of Southern Alberta had not yet come into existence, the Hudson's Bay Company brought most of its freight by paddle wheel steamer up the Saskatchewan, and the C.P.R. "had been talked about." (3)

True, the telegraph line had reached Edmonton in the fall of 1879 and for a time it appeared that the settlement's position of isolation would end. In anticipation of the coming of the railway, the winter of '81 and '82 was the time of the great western land "boom". "Outside speculation had included Edmonton in their great expectations, and an era of speculation set in. . . . There was active speculation on river claims on the present Edmonton townsite, and

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 1, 1901. The C.P.R. contract was brought down to the House for ratification on Dec. 10, 1880.

as spring approached excitement increased." In Winnipeg there was a mounting fever of speculation in town lots, with exchange of property at the most outrageous figures, "until at last a sale of town lots on the Hudson's Bay Reserve at Edmonton was staged. The sale was a huge success, but it broke the back of the boom. . . . There was woe and lamentation and the name of Edmonton was on the lips of all as having been the cause of the collapse." (4) Of the most serious consequence to Edmonton, the projected route of the C.P.R. through the Yellowhead Pass was during the winter of '81-'82 deflected to the southern route through the Kicking Horse Pass, leaving Edmonton side-tracked and with little hope of rail communication for years to come. (5)

To Frank Oliver, looking back with the perspective of time these years no doubt appeared "years of small things", but to the settlers of Edmonton in the 'eighties local problems were of the most important and urgent nature - the very stuff and texture of their daily lives. No surveys other than base lines were completed before 1882; land tenure and squatters' rights were matters of immediate concern. There was frequently confusion and uncertainty regarding timber

(4) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

(5) Referred to in the Bulletin as early as Jan. 28, 1882. Government action took place in April, 1882. Refer to Murray Gibbon The Romantic History of the Canadian Pacific New York 1937 p. 242.

and mineral regulations. Roads, mail service, schools and the administration of justice all created their own peculiar problems to challenge the pioneer.

The two seats of government at Ottawa and Regina were remote, and the dual influence of the Dominion Government and the North West Council was sufficiently spent by distance to throw the community largely on its own resources. Regulations and prohibitions emanating from the East were often regarded by the settlers in the light of unwarranted restrictions, promulgated by men who at best knew nothing of the conditions of the frontier and who at worst were the tools of certain "interests". Frontier radicalism was manifest in many quarters, and found voice in bitter denunciations of Macdonald's Conservative government, the Syndicate, (6) the National Policy and the colonization companies. Sir John's system of "amiable venality" (7) did not rest easily upon western shoulders.

The Bulletin, however, did not serve merely as a clearing house for North West grievances. It spent column after column in publicizing the advantages of the North West: its soil, climate, minerals and forests. It served the important purpose of publishing government notices, regulations,

(6) The C.P.R. was at this time usually referred to as the "Syndicate".

(7) This phrase is borrowed from Lower, A.R.M. Colony to Nation Toronto 1946 pp. 365-6.

tenders, and ordinances of the North West Council. Material of this latter kind it usually handled quite objectively, but upon occasion the editor's ironic humor found vent in something like this:

Mr. T. Anderson is issuing timber licenses now, and may be found during business hours in the Hudson's Bay Company office in the Fort. As the government, from motives of economy or otherwise, does not allow Mr. Anderson to advertise except by permission of his superiors at Ottawa, we give the above, and will give what further notice may from time to time be deemed of public interest, free, for the double purpose of keeping our readers posted and doing an act of charity to a government which is either very poor or very mean. (8)

In the wide range of subjects covered and in the method of their treatment, the Bulletin affords a fine cross-section of North West frontier life. Two of the topics most frequently and most forcefully dealt with were lands and railways.

In 1870, the year of the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada, the Rupert's Land Act and the Manitoba Act made provision for the control of the western public domain. "For the new province of Manitoba as well as for the North West Territories 'all ungranted or waste lands' were by statute to be 'administered by the government of Canada for the purposes of the Dominion'." (9) These "purposes of the

(8) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 10, 1881. "Timber Tom" Anderson was a Dominion agent in the Edmonton district for years.

(9) Chester Martin Dominion Lands Policy p. 223.

"Dominion" were chiefly two: railways and settlement. To make possible the extension of railways into the North West, and particularly the building of a transcontinental line, the government instituted the system of railway land grants. Within a "belt" along the prospective railway certain sections of land were granted to the railway company. To encourage immigration and so provide traffic for the railways, a free homestead system was instituted and expanded. By 1882 "the significant fact could now be announced broadcast that the even-numbered sections throughout the whole range of Dominion lands were now free to the pioneer." (10) The Department of the Interior was organized in 1873, and as one of its divisions the Dominion Lands Branch was, "specially charged . . . with the duty of surveying and allotting to settlers the rich and boundless prairies of the West . . ." (11) This Lands Branch developed formidable proportions, "but the results for many years were meagre." (12) Despite free homesteads, settlers did not pour into the West.

One reason is not far to seek. The government, and particularly the administration of Sir John A. Macdonald, intent upon the doctrine that the railway must be "built by means of the land through which it had to pass," (13)

(10) Chester Martin Dominion Lands Policy p. 398.

(11) Ibid p. 396.

(12) Ibid p. 396.

(13) Ibid p. 397.

subordinated the free homestead system to the demands of the railway land grants. ". . . the railway, for the time being, took priority over every other consideration." (14) In fact, "this priority conceded at the outset to the railway as the most imperative necessity of national policy may be said to have remained a feature of Dominion administration until the railway land grant system was finally abandoned in 1894." (15)

Western lands, then, including timber, mineral and water rights, were controlled by the Dominion and administered by the Department of the Interior through its agents. Certain sections of land were open to free homesteading. Certain sections were not open, including the railway land grants, Hudson's Bay Company land (16) and areas reserved to Indians and private colonization companies. (17) Some of these holdings, not in solid blocks, but of sections alternating with sections of government land, constituted the "land lock", "which formed the perennial grievance of the western pioneer for a generation." (18) Large reserves and constantly changing government regulations discouraged settlement; the

(14) Chester Martin Dominion Lands Policy p. 395.

(15) Ibid p. 395.

(16) Lands reserved to the H.B.C. under the terms of the transfer of 1870. 50,000 acres adjoining H.B.C. trading posts, together with one-twentieth of the "fertile belt".

(17) Only 8 sections in a township were actually open to homesteading.

(18) Chester Martin, op. cit., p. 239.

location of the free grants led to undue dispersion of settlers. Much of the land was as yet unsurveyed, and could be occupied only under uncertain "squatters' rights".

The purposes of the Dominion as expressed in policy and administration conflicted at many points with the immediate interests of the early settlers who wanted unrestricted choice of lands, security of tenure, reasonably generous timber, mineral and water rights, heavy immigration and a railway built at the expense of all Canada, and not simply "out of North West lands." It is perhaps not necessary at this point to attempt an analysis of all the issues involved, nor an evaluation of the conflicting claims of Dominion policy and North West rights. But this much is certain: the North West did have grievances and it did need to make itself articulate. It had to find a politically independent voice to oppose Dominion policy where it appeared unsound; to criticize government enactments where they proved inadequate, unworkable or unjust; to urge corrective and constructive measures; to expose negligence, self-interest or officiousness on the part of government agents; and to denounce the rapacity, where it might exist, of colonization companies and speculators. The traditional channels of popular protest against central authority were at this time practically non-existent, particularly in that part of the North West which is now Alberta. The North West had no

representation in the Dominion House; and upon the North West Council, a body of the most restricted powers, Edmonton had no member until 1883.

The Edmonton area with its sparse population, less than one thousand until 1883, was the most isolated community of any consequence in the West; and its grievances, particularly with respect to lands, were correspondingly strong. That some of these grievances may have been rooted in the very isolation of the settlement rather than in any particular shortcomings of the government, did not render them any less intense. The Upper Saskatchewan Country found its most untiring champion in Frank Oliver and its voice in the columns of the Edmonton Bulletin.

Oliver was consistently the bitter opponent of "Macdonaldism", and he conducted his attacks against the Dominion's western lands policy with unrestrained vigor. Commenting upon the rumor that the government was to encourage Irish immigration, he inquired caustically what land it would have left to give them after its generosity to the railway and colonization companies, and then added:

But if room can be found for them, it is to be hoped that they will come in thousands and tens of thousands; for, when the time arrives that the country must rid itself of those blood-sucking land monopolies, there are no men who are likely to do better service in the good cause than these same wild Irishmen from the country of Galway. (19)

One of the most urgent needs of the early 'eighties was the completion of the survey, particularly around the old Fort. Residents and the few incoming settlers held their claims under vague squatters' rights, while settlers coming into the more easterly surveyed areas enjoyed security of tenure within the homestead laws. This neglect of the original settlers was resented, while "speculators and paupers from the four corners of the earth can have their lands allotted to them and their titles in their pockets before they even see Canada, or strike a blow on the land that is given to them." (20)

The fear uppermost in the minds of the Edmonton pioneers was that with the survey and the railway would come a host of speculators and "land sharks" against whom their squatters' rights would give them little protection. There is scarcely an issue of the early Bulletin which fails to deal with this question of security of land tenure. Referring to the North West Regulations of January, 1882, Oliver lashed out at the government in no uncertain temper. After denouncing special grants and privileges to companies, he demanded to know why the regulations guaranteed respect for the rights only of those squatters who took up land before 1879. Why, he asked, discriminate against those who came later; and

(20) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 21, 1881.

why should the squatter have to pay for the railway - or for his land?

Having come here without the aid of either railway or government he owes nothing to either, and to make him pay for that which did not benefit him is simple robbery.

From the sentences (in the Regulations) relating to colonization schemes and pasture lands it seems to be the wish of the government to throw the land as much as possible into the hands of the speculators.

It would be well for the government and speculators to remember that when they crowd settlers too closely someone has to go, and judging by past events in the old Provinces of Canada, and more recently in Ireland, it will not be the settlers, or at least not they alone. (21)

The Bulletin of December 3, 1881, expressed gratification at the establishment of the Edmonton timber agency; but, the editor warned, "We wish to say emphatically that nothing short of liberal measures in regard to timber required by actual settlers for the improvement of their claims will be acceptable to the people here." That the measures adopted were not acceptable soon became evident, and Oliver branded the clause in the timber regulations regarding the homesteaders' use of timber as "a specimen of sublime idiocy". (22) Virulent attacks were made on those features of the mineral and timber regulations which the settlers found most obnoxious: the duty on timber used over and above the barest requirements, the tax of twenty-five cents a cord on dry

(21) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 7, 1882.

(22) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 17, 1881.

wood and the royalty of one dollar a ton on coal mined in the North West.

Why is it that every effort is made to throw the lands, minerals and carrying trade into the hands of speculators and companies? It is to create great monied interests whose existence is bound up with that of the government, and who will, of course, fight for the government as for themselves. (23)

. . . the present government seems to consider the Territories as a vast grab bag for the benefit of its friends, and the settlers as gold pieces to be sweated as often as the opportunity occurs or the needs of themselves or their friends require. (24)

Violent dissatisfaction with the timber law revealed itself in a public meeting called in January of 1882, at which D. Maloney of Rivière Qui Barre was chairman and Frank Oliver secretary. After the airing of many grievances, both relevant and otherwise, the meeting appointed a committee consisting of Father Leduc and two others to interview Anderson, the timber agent. Suggestions were made for a league to refuse to get wood permits. Finally, after much heated discussion, the assembled settlers drafted a telegram of protest to the Minister of the Interior. In the issue of the Bulletin reporting this meeting Oliver wrote fiery articles headed, "Free Fuel or Fight" and "Sic Semper Tyrannus". (25) The results were disappointing. The committee did not get

(23) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 7, 1882.

(24) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 24, 1881.

(25) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 7, 1882.

very far with "Timber Tom" Anderson who knew his regulations and who appreciated his position as a Dominion agent. The telegram to the Minister of the Interior elicited a brief and non-committal reply from his Acting Deputy Minister. (26)

The Bulletin expressed disgust at this lack of progress made, but its editor put forward a suggestion which revealed the politician. Since the settlers could not, apparently, get the ear of the government, why not send a petition to the leader of the opposition? He would know how to use it to embarrass the government, and it might get results. It is not known whether this interesting suggestion was acted upon. Oliver advised his readers meanwhile to "grin and bear it".

But there is a time coming when in spite of oppressive taxes and unfair land regulations, the North West will contain an overwhelming majority of the whole population of the Dominion. When that time arrives, if not before, we can hope for justice for we will be able to demand it and enforce the demand. (27)

The local restiveness induced by insecurity of land tenure was aggravated by the rising land values of the "boom" of 1882, and culminated in the claim-jumping incidents in which Oliver was prominently involved.

The first incident was precipitated by a Mr. L. George who "jumped" the claim of J. Sinclair. This claim, along

(26) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 7, 1882.

(27) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 14, 1882.

the brow of the river hill, was occupied by A. Macdonald & Co. as renters, but George drove stakes on the property and put a small force of men to erect a frame house there. By late afternoon, with the house already approaching the skeletal stage, an excited crowd gathered. Arguments ensued. George produced a revolver and took up his position in the studded house, from which the crowd tried to induce him to come forth.

Some of the crowd also reached through and seized George, trying to pull him out of the building, but as they were attempting to pull him through between different studs at the same time they were not successful, so he was allowed to remain. (28)

While someone went to get a rope the arguing continued, but "as the discussion got rather tame and the rope was a long time in coming, some of the crowd began to build a fire by which to warm themselves while others began to tear the building down." (29) When the rope was finally brought, the building was dragged to the edge of the bank about two hundred feet above the river, where George finally decided that it was time to come out. The crowd then dragged the shack along until it was on Colin Fraser's property, removed the tent and bedding from its interior, and tumbled it down the bank. One of those present then handed back to George the

(28) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 11, 1882. A Bulletin report obviously written by Oliver.

(29) Ibid

revolver of which he had been relieved during the early scuffle.

It was fortunate that no blood was shed in a situation which might well have provoked more extreme violence. Apparently there was some suspicion that A. Macdonald & Co. had instigated George's action, and "a party of about a dozen men, thoroughly armed, kept watch in Macdonald & Co.'s store all night fearing an attack from the Vigilance Committee which was being formed." (30) The Vigilance Committee was organized that night at a meeting in McDougall's Hall. After preliminary discussion it was decided that the committee should be secret, and "all who did not wish to join the society were requested to leave the meeting." (31)

A committee was then appointed to draft a resolution stating the necessity, object and intentions of the society; and to formulate an oath to be taken by the members on joining. When this had been done forty-seven men signed the roll and took the oath, after which the committee was regularly organized. (32)

The object of "The Vigilantes" was, of course, to prevent further claim-jumping - by the use of force if need be. Frank Oliver, as a leading citizen and as publisher of the Bulletin, was in a position to exercise considerable influence on local opinion. His stand on the formation of this strictly "extra-legal" organization is revealing.

(30) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 11, 1882.

(31) Ibid

(32) Ibid

The immediate consequence of the trouble has been the forming of a vigilance committee who have bound themselves to uphold each other in their rights to their claims and the probability is that any other attempts to jump will be dealt with severely, while no doubt a more determined resistance will be made; and once bloodshed occurs, as it is almost certain to, it is hard to say where the matter will end.

The people will assert their rights. If the government will not protect them in those rights they will protect themselves, and any bloodshed that may occur will be justly chargeable to the government. (33)

Oliver maintained, quite rightly, that the only proper solution of the land tenure question lay in the completion of the survey and the appointment of a land commission to adjust squatters' claims. While approving of the vigilance committee, he did not favor continuing it as a secret organization, and was soon able to commend its decision to become an open society.

While we deplore the necessity for the existence of a society which shall have for its object the taking of the law into its own hands, there is no doubt that the necessity for such a society exists.

As the society proposes to take up and deal with cases in which the law will not give justice, public opinion to be the judge, so its actions should at all times, except in exceptional cases, be open to judgment by the same tribunal.

Let those who wish to steal their neighbors' land bind themselves to secrecy by oath, but let those who wish to uphold right for right's sake do so in broad daylight, challenging criticism from all quarters and relying only on the justice of their cause and their good right arms. (34)

(33) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 11, 1882. Editorial. The Bulletin was subsequently criticized in certain quarters as having been the mouthpiece of "The Vigilantes". Edmonton Bulletin, June 24, 1882 - Vide "Justice" in the Winnipeg Times.

(34) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 18, 1882.

Feeling was running high in the settlement when the second attempt to "jump" was made. The "jumper" was J.M. Bannerman, brother of a well known member of the Dominion House. Bannerman's action was apparently in the nature of a "test case". He informed the vigilance committee of his intention to build a shanty on the Methodist Mission claim, stating that he had authorization from the Minister of the Interior. Matt Macaulay, who was occupying Mission House on behalf of the church, forbade him to proceed. Bannerman was informed that he must await the "real" decision of the government respecting ownership of the property, and that meanwhile the vigilance committee would "apply the necessary persuasion". (35)

Bannerman proceeded with the construction of the shack, and in due course "The Vigilantes" assembled at the Methodist Mission property. They met with no resistance and there was no violence. In mid-afternoon they loaded Bannerman's shack on a sleigh, hauled it to the spot where the crowd had disposed of George's building, and toppled it over the bank.

Bannerman immediately had warrants sworn out for the arrest of several parties concerned in this "house moving".

. . . the preliminary examination was held on Thursday last before Capt. Gagnon, J.P. Court was held in the school house. At about 2 o'clock in the afternoon all parties concerned assembled at the building and F. Oliver was placed under arrest.

The charge against the prisoner was that he assisted, aided and abetted in the moving and destroying of the house and incited others to do likewise. (36)

During the hearing of the witnesses Bannerman stated that he saw Oliver come over to his shanty "a little in advance of the rest." (37) Another witness charged that he had seen Matt Macaulay "coming to the building with a chain over his shoulder." In general, however, it seemed very difficult for any of the participants or spectators to remember the exact part played in the "house moving" by any of those present. As an outcome of the preliminary hearing five men, including Oliver, were committed for trial at the sitting of the Saskatchewan District Court of June 15, on a charge of "aiding, assisting and abetting" in the destruction of Bannerman's shack. (38)

Oliver's treatment of the whole episode in the columns of the Bulletin is straight from the shoulder, and spiced with ironic wit. Unequivocally, he upheld the right of the Methodist Mission to its property on the basis of prior possession and improvements, stating that the land was not open for homesteading anyway, and that the vigilance committee were in the right to move the shanty from land in the actual occupancy of the missionary society.

(36) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 4, 1882.

(37) Ibid

(38) Ibid

. . . if the law will protect one man in appropriating that which is already in the possession of another, whether it be land or moveables, let the fact be known at once, and let shot-gun law prevail. (39)

His lengthy report of the preliminary hearing referred to above must be read in its entirety to be properly appreciated. Referring later to the approaching District Court trial he wrote:

As one of the proprietors of this enterprising and veracious journal is among the elect, comments by us on the probable course the affair will take would not be in good taste. But one thing has been brought out clearly and that is that the people at large are prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of their rights at all times and against all comers, let the consequences be what they may. (40)

The news report on the trial itself was very short and to the point, ending: "The jury, after a short absence, returned a verdict of not guilty." (41) There is no doubt that this verdict was received with great satisfaction by the defendants' fellow citizens, and Oliver himself, in his editorial of June 24, under the heading "Law and Justice" did not hesitate to gloat over the outcome of the trial as a victory for the squatter and a salutary lesson for the claim-jumper.

(39) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 4, 1882.

(40) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 11, 1882.

(41) Edmonton Bulletin, June 11, 1882. That this was not Oliver's only "brush with the law" is revealed by the following amusing local item in the Bulletin, June 25, 1887: "On Thursday last, before A.H. Griesbach, J.P., Frank Oliver was charged with maliciously killing, maiming, etc., two domestic fowls, the property of Walter Scott Robertson, on May 25th last. Plaintiff Robertson admitted trespass and damage by fowls, only knew of one being injured and it was killed by his son. Defendant fined ten dollars and costs. C.H. Connell for plaintiff."

The outcome of the Bannerman affair discouraged those who had an eye on their neighbor's property. The fall in land values with the collapse of the "boom" removed the incentive to claim-jumping. Oliver continued a vigorous campaign for the survey and a land commission, meanwhile suggesting, "The next time the Council of the North West Territories meets for the transaction of business it is to be hoped that an ordinance will be passed defining the rights of settlers on unsurveyed lands in regard to each other." (42)

The surveyors arrived in Edmonton during July of 1882, and immediately began their township and section survey throughout the district. The progress of the survey was accompanied by re-adjustments of holdings and by land disputes enough; but that the squatter fared comparatively well and the speculator poorly may be attributed in no small measure to Frank Oliver and the Bulletin. Ever zealous of the interests of the settler, and ever ready to publicize adversely the activities of the speculator and the land-shark, the pioneer paper did everything possible to keep the squatter and the homesteader advised of their rights and to discourage those who would victimize them. The editor was not immune from certain pre-conceptions and prejudices current in the life of the pioneer community. He occasionally engaged in a journalistic "tilting at windmills" or in

(42) Edmonton Bulletin, May 27, 1882. When a member of the North West Council Oliver sponsored such an ordinance.

battering a man of straw. But he was positive, strong-minded and absolutely merciless in his denunciation of the stupidity of bureaucracy or the avarice of speculation. The Bulletin provided a publicizing and restraining force much needed in the Edmonton of the 'eighties.

Oliver's satisfaction with the progress of the survey was soon tempered by the appearance on the scene of the Edmonton Land Co., shortly to be known as the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Co. (43) This company secured a colonization grant of six townships centering on Edmonton and including much of the choicest land north and east of the settlement. The terms of the grant were most liberal - for the company; and Oliver remarked caustically that it was now evident why the surveyors had been sent out. (44) He already had a deep distrust of colonization companies, (45) and the establishment of one on his very doorstep gave point and intensity

(43) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 12, 1882.

See Morton History of Prairie Settlement p. 62 for map showing location of the company's grant.

The Regulations of January, 1882, mark the beginning of colonization company grants.

Stanley, G.F.G. The Birth of Western Canada London 1936 p. 186 states of colonization companies that, "As instruments of colonization they were failures," and quotes Oliver, E.H. The Settlement of Saskatchewan p. 65, to the effect that, "Only seven companies placed more than fifty settlers on the land."

The majority of the companies were dissolved after four years. None remained in operation after 1891.

(44) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 12, 1882.

(45) Edmonton Bulletin, July 15, 1882. "The Great Swindle"

to his antagonism. These companies he now placed with his collection of other "bêtes noirs" - the Conservative Government, the Syndicate and the National Policy - for virulent and unremitting attack. (46)

The operations of the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Co. raised new local questions of squatters' rights and pre-emption claims. In February of 1883 a delegation consisting of D. Maloney and Father Leduc representing Edmonton, St. Albert and Fort Saskatchewan went East to interview the Minister of the Interior on district problems. This mission, which had the warmest support of the Bulletin, accomplished a good deal, securing a fuller guarantee of squatters' rights, more satisfactory recognition of pre-emption claims, and the promise of a land office and registry office to be established in Edmonton. Meanwhile Oliver continued his editorial defences of squatters' rights, even including those of the so-called "speculative squatters". (47)

It seems, however, that these squatters frequently happen to select choice locations such as river crossings and other prospective town sites, and thereby balk the plans of the government, the Syndicate and speculators generally, who look upon the North West as a preserve in which to exercise their ingenuity in the getting of other people's money without working for it. (48)

(46) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 25, 1882; Dec. 9, 1882; May 19, 1883.

(47) Edmonton Bulletin, May 19, 1883.

(48) Edmonton Bulletin, May 5, 1883.

The squatter was exhorted to "hang on", and advised that a united front would thwart any attempt of the government, the railway, or the colonization company to wrest his land away from him. (49) "Another turn of the screw" was the Bulletin's characterization of the government's new homestead regulations within the railway belt. (50)

Ranking in importance with land tenure and closely associated with it was the problem of railway construction. Western railway schemes and negotiations were current in the years following the first abortive C.P.R. Co. of 1873. Note has already been made of advance surveys in the North West.

In February of 1881, after lengthy negotiations, Macdonald's Conservative Government ratified the charter of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, the "Syndicate" of Frank Oliver's scathing editorials. There were, in the charter, many terms which met with violent opposition in the West, and to which future reference must be made. The Company undertook the construction of a railway to the pacific seaboard, following the Yellowhead route. (51) The contract granted the Company a cash subsidy of \$25,000,000, and 25,000,000 acres of land to be taken in alternate sections - the odd-numbered sections - extending back 24 miles on each

(49) Edmonton Bulletin, May 5, 1883.

(50) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 2, 1882.

(51) The later diversion of the route south to the Kicking Horse Pass has already been mentioned.

side of the railway from Winnipeg to Jasper House. It was understood that the land granted must be at least "fairly fit for settlement", and that should there be insufficient land of such quality within the railway belt, the Company could make up its grant by selections in other areas. (52) The property and capital of the Company were exempt from taxation "forever", while the land grants were exempt for twenty years "after the grant thereof from the Crown." To protect the line from the competition of American systems, the so-called "monopoly clause" forbade, for a period of twenty years, the construction south of the C.P.R. main line of any other line running North West and South East within fifteen miles of the United States boundary. (53)

The C.P.R. "deal" was bitterly opposed in Parliament by Blake and his Liberals; and there was a feeling in the West, very strong in certain quarters, that the people of Manitoba and the Territories had been "sold down the river"; that they had been, in effect, placed at the mercy of a private monopoly of immense power, and left with no real assurance that its operations, by their very nature vital to the well-being of the West, would be conducted in accordance with the proper interests of the country.

(52) This was called "indemnity selection".

(53) Chester Martin Dominion Lands Policy p. 268 ff.
Gibbon The History of the Canadian Pacific p. 206 ff.

No more vigorous voice was heard throughout the North West in denunciation of the "Syndicate deal" than that of Frank Oliver in the Edmonton Bulletin. As early as 1880, while negotiations were going forward between Macdonald and George Stephen, Oliver singled out certain features of the proposed agreement for attack. Rather than a line running north of the Great Lakes he favored a prairie terminus at Winnipeg, with connecting lines running south to join the American systems, and not ". . . from Lake Superior to Red River, through a country the whole of which is not worth a yellow dog." (54) He opposed, from the first, the principle of railway land grants and privately subscribed capital, especially that of "foreign speculators". "Why," he asked, "cannot the government use the public credit to build the road?" "And after the road is built, let the government sell the land, not to land-sharks but to actual settlers."

(55)

In a fiery Bulletin editorial he launched an attack under the heading, "The Pacific Swindle". He charged the East, "in their greed and parsimony", with intending to saddle the cost of the whole line on the North West, and damned Eastern self-interest by suggesting that, "The sun rises in Halifax, shines all day straight over Montreal and Ottawa,

(54) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 13, 1880.

(55) Ibid

and sets in Toronto." (56) It would not be too difficult to find certain modern parallels to this expression of Western wrath.

Again condemning the section of the road north of Lake Superior as unnecessary, and advocating the development of the fertile prairie belt first, he pointed out what he believed to be, "the great injustice of making the present and future settlers of the North West pay for the whole road, and of locking up the land now to pay for parts of the road unnecessary to the last degree, and which will not be built for many years" (57)

It would be misleading to suggest that all Western feeling was equally hostile to the Syndicate. Apart from speculators, land agents and government apologists, whose approbation of the deal may be assumed, there were doubtless many settlers in whose opinion the fact of actual railway construction outweighed any unfavorable features of the Company's charter. There were those also, who, not given to speculating on probable outcomes, or unaware of the charter terms, simply accepted a railway as a railway. However, a large section of Western opinion did view the Syndicate with the gravest apprehension and alarm, and the following editorial, strong though its language may be, no doubt reflects with

(56) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 27, 1880.

(57) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 24, 1881.

reasonable accuracy a feeling common throughout the West.

The Swindlegate

Unfair to the settler in every point though the contract is, all the power of a wealthy company and all the strength of a political party, and all the self-interest of their myriads of hirelings, will be united in its support. But every settler in the North West is, and every man who comes into the territory to make his living by his own endeavours will become, the natural enemy of each and every one who is connected with it; and the time will come when not all the wealth nor all the influence nor all the meanness that these three powers can bring to bear will keep this bargain - procured by corruption and founded on injustice - from being broken, by fair means or foul, by ballot or bullet. (58)

Oliver was especially critical of the policy of constructing the railway and developing the North West "out of North West lands."

That is to say, after the H.B.Co., the school funds, the railway companies, the thousand and one colonization companies, the ranchmen, the religious institutions, and the grand army of speculators generally get their respective slices of the country, the settlers on the paltry balance will have to shoulder the burden of building the C.P.R., not only through the North West, but also through British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario and return every dollar that the older provinces have spent in developing (?) the country. (59)

As early as 1881 he was advocating the construction of a Hudson's Bay Railway as the most direct means of breaking the monopoly of the Syndicate, and during succeeding years many articles on the desirability of a Hudson's Bay line

(58) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 7, 1881.

(59) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 4, 1882.

appeared in the Bulletin. (60) His original scheme envisaged the improvement of the Saskatchewan River to Lake Winnipeg and the construction of a railway from there to Hudson Bay. "River to rail-end to Hudson Bay" was, he declared, a perfectly feasible route, and one which would circumvent the C.P.R. monopoly, "unless the government can be persuaded to disallow the Saskatchewan River from running downhill, or pass an act to freeze up the Atlantic Ocean." (61)

In the spring of 1882 the government passed the Act enabling the C.P.R. to change its route from the Yellowhead to the Kicking Horse Pass farther south. The exact reasons for this re-routing are a matter of some controversy. At any rate the Edmonton settlement was dealt a heavy blow. Oliver saw in the Act just one more proof of the iniquity of the Syndicate and all its works. However, he pointed out, once the road came through, branch lines might be built into the Edmonton area, if not by the C.P.R., then by some other company. Meanwhile, the only alternative for several years was to develop the Saskatchewan River and continue

(60) During his first session in the Dominion House, Oliver sponsored a Hudson Bay Railway bill. A feature of his noted Land Act of 1908, when he was Minister of the Interior, was the sale of pre-emptions to finance the building of the Hudson Bay line.

(61) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 31, 1881.
See also, Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 3, 1882.

the fight for the Hudson's Bay Railway. (62) Soon he was pointing out, in a caustic editorial, the wholesale rejection of south lands by the C.P.R., and the Company's "grabbing of better land outside the 48 mile belt." (63)

In fact the Syndicate was an oft-repeated and much maligned object of the Bulletin's wrath during the 'eighties; and Oliver, whether attacking its monopoly, (64) condemning its alleged "land grabbing", (65) pleading for railway competition, (66) or backing the Farmers' Union of Manitoba against its alleged rapacity, (67) revealed in his articles a tone of uncompromising hostility which, whether or not it was altogether justified, unquestionably reflected the attitude of many a prairie settler.

(62) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 28, 1882; Sept. 3, 1882; April 7, 1883.

(63) Edmonton Bulletin, April 7, 1883. The Company was rejecting certain lands in the 48 mile belt and making selection elsewhere in the "fertile belt" in accordance with the "indemnity selection" provision of its charter.

(64) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 24, 1883. "Showing their Teeth" A reference to the Syndicate's allegedly preventing a certain Rykert from holding his timber claim in the Cypress Hills, and allegedly thwarting Bannerman, the M.P., in his attempt to organize a Hudson's Bay Railway project.
"The Syndicate wants it all and the small fry want their share."

(65) Edmonton Bulletin, April 7, 1883. "C.P.R. Lands"

(66) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 26, 1883. "Worse and More of It"
Edmonton Bulletin, June 16, 1883. "The Sphinx Speaks"- An article opposing Stephen's suggestion of a union of the C.P.R. with the G.T.R.

(67) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 15, 1883.

Lands and railways were not, however, the only matter of vital concern to the pioneers, and the Bulletin took the lead on many other questions affecting their interests.

Included in the area covered by Treaty Number 6 with the Cree (68) and not far distant from the domain of the warlike Blackfoot Confederacy, the isolated district was in a peculiarly vulnerable position in the event of trouble with the natives.

The Dominion's Indian administration had undergone several changes since the acquisition of the Territories in 1870. Under the Board of Indian Commissioners for Manitoba and the North West established in 1873, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Land Bureau and the Indian Commissioners each functioned independently of the others. This resulted in a diversity of policy and action which threw Indian affairs into a state of confusion. In 1877 this system was replaced by Superintendencies and resident local agents acting under the office of the Indian Department at Ottawa. However, such was the apathy of the government that the Superintendencies remained comparatively unorganized, and by 1879 Indian administration was in a more disorganized

(68) Stanley The Birth of Western Canada p. 171. Stanley says of Treaty Number 6: "The area treated for was vast and extensive. The Indians were wild and warlike and (before the negotiation of the Treaty) determined to allow no white invasion of a country to which immigration had already turned for settlement."

state than ever. In that year the government appointed the Hon. Edgar Dewdney as Indian Commissioner and sent him to the North West with broad organizing and discretionary powers. In 1880 the Department of Indian Affairs, hitherto a part of the Department of the Interior, was established as a separate entity. (69)

In the 'seventies and 'eighties the old order in the West was passing away. The disappearance of the buffalo, the coming of the railway, and the settling of the Indians on the reserves created problems calculated to tax the understanding of the government and the efficiency of its Department of Indian Affairs. But according to reports of the day and critical opinion since, both the understanding of the one and the efficiency of the other were sadly lacking. "The papers and correspondence of these times are full of references to the misery of the Indians and the danger of an Indian uprising." (70) What was, apparently, common knowledge to the settler was unknown to or ignored by the government and its higher Indian agents, and as late as 1884, eight months before the outbreak of the North West Rebellion, the Hon. Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories and Indian Commissioner, informed the North

(69) Stanley, op. cit., pp. 227-8.

(70) Black, N.F. A History of Saskatchewan and the Old North West Regina 1913 p. 199.

West Council:

The exaggerated reports of Indian difficulties which have lately appeared in some of the newspapers and which must do the country harm, induce me to say a few words to you on that subject. From what I have seen myself during my travels in the spring, and from what I gather from the correspondence which reaches me as Indian Commissioner, I can confidently say that our Indians are generally more contented than they have been since the Treaty was made. that there is cause for alarm I deny. I am sure the general feeling is one of security, and exaggerated reports that have been circulated are to be regretted. (71)

The "exaggerated reports" of which Dewdney spoke (72) might well have been aimed directly at certain of Oliver's editorials on Indian affairs. Although the North West Rebellion was not primarily an "Indian war", it was accompanied by Indian risings and massacres and by a general Indian danger that hung at times by a mere hair. Which of the two men had a keener appreciation of the gravity of the Indian situation, "the war-whoop of Big Bear", resounding enough to rouse even the Dominion Government from its lethargy, was soon to reveal.

In the very first issue of the Bulletin, the editor, commenting on the alleged negligence of the agent in making treaty payments to the Mountain Stoney, warned that the local Indians should be treated decently to win their

(71) Journals of the Council of the North West Territories 1877 - 1887 E.J. Weidman, Printer "Progress" office, Qu'Appelle Saskatchewan No date.
Journal of 1884 p. 9
(Hereafter referred to as J.N.W. Council)

(72) As a member of the North West Council, Oliver would be present to hear this speech.

goodwill.

. . . and although there is no danger to be apprehended by these people just now, in view of the fact that there is liable to be an outbreak of the plains Indians at any moment, it would be well for the government, instead of estranging those who are friendly, to bind them closer by fair and honest treatment, so if the time should come when the scattered settlements of this country would have to make head against an overwhelming force of hostile Indians without the possibility of government aid in time to be of any service, they could count on the help or at least the friendly neutrality of the only Indians that the Blackfeet are afraid of. (73)

Oliver nourished a prolonged and bitter antagonism to Dewdney, and he was deeply critical of the Indian Commissioner's handling of Indian affairs:

But matters have come to such a pitch now that it is safe to predict that if Mr. Dewdney remains Indian Commissioner for a year or two more, and continues to administer affairs as he has done, Canada will have an Indian war on her hands just as certainly as the United States has had them. (74)

In July of 1883 the Bulletin again warned the government of the dangers latent in the Indian situation. With five hundred Police in the Territories, there was still much horse stealing and unrest. Big Bear and Piapot were at the Cypress Hills, the potential trouble spot. Only the wisdom and moderation of Crowfoot restrained the Blackfoot. "This situation," said the Bulletin, "stems from the general mal-administration of Indian affairs in the Territories." (75)

(73) The Bulletin, Dec. 6, 1880.

(74) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 21, 1882.
See also The Bulletin, Jan. 3, 1881.

(75) Edmonton Bulletin, July 7, 1883.

Oliver's advice for the effective handling of Indian affairs was simple enough: let the government understand the problem, appoint good agents, keep its promises to the natives and scrupulously live up to the treaty stipulations. That he was well aware of the weaknesses in the Indian administration is revealed in the following comment in concluding a report on rumors of Indian unrest: "With such a people and under such circumstances, all that is required is the occasion and a leader to land the North West in the middle of a first class Indian war." (76) Ottawa officials were prone to consider Frank Oliver an alarmist, but Macdonald's government would have done well to pay attention to the warnings sounded in the fiery little Bulletin during these years. (77)

Under the North West Territories Act of 1875, the powers of the Lieutenant-Governor and his North West Council included the administration of justice. The Lieutenant-Governor appointed justices of the peace and stipendiary magistrates responsible for the interpretation of law in the Territories. Naturally, in the early 'eighties, these law officials were few in number and widely separated.

(76) Edmonton Bulletin, June 14, 1884.

(77) Other western papers called attention to the dangers of the Indian situation, including the Saskatchewan Herald of Battleford, the Regina Leader and the Free Press of Winnipeg.

Edmonton particularly felt the "remoteness of magisterial power", and the Bulletin was prompt in demanding more speedy and effective administration of justice and the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate for the settlement. (78)

In the second issue of his paper Oliver dealt with the question of North West justice. He charged that three Edmonton residents were expected to go all the way to Battleford for trial in the middle of winter and demanded to know why the cases could not at least be tried in summer. He also maintained that court was held too seldom, and that prisoners had lain in Fort Saskatchewan jail for from six months to a year awaiting trial. "If," he said, "a mere lack of inclination prevents Col. Richardson from visiting this place more frequently in the discharge of his duties, it is high time that another man had his place; but if it is impossible for him (and it certainly may be) to come - common justice demands the appointment of a magistrate specially to this part of the country." (79)

Oliver was concerned, not only with the actual administration of justice, but with the applicability of Dominion laws and North West ordinances to conditions throughout the North West. Mentioning an article in the Saskatchewan

(78) In 1880 the nearest stipendiary magistrate, Col. Richardson, was resident at Battleford.

(79) The Bulletin, Dec. 13, 1880.

Herald regarding the legal apprehension of men who had deserted their employment on Dominion land surveys he wrote, "If there is a law making desertion of employment a criminal offence it might well be struck out of the statutes at once It might do well enough on the meridian of Greenwich, but it ain't worth a cent on the 114th West." (80)

With considerable feeling the Bulletin called attention to the necessity for proper ordinances on such mundane, but locally important matters as hogs running at large, horse mange, the status of old trails, what constituted occupancy in the case of a squatter, the forming of municipalities, prairie fires, and the destruction of sheep by dogs. (81) Oliver made the notorious McCormick case (82) the occasion for an editorial roundly denouncing the assumption of extra-legal powers by North West officials. (83) The foregoing matters may appear somewhat trivial, but in terms of their time and place they were of the utmost significance to the North West settler. No doubt the Bulletin's outspoken opinions had a chastening influence upon the local exercise

(80) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 4, 1882.

(81) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 16, 1882.

(82) In a case given considerable notoriety at the time, a certain McCormick was ordered flogged by the Attorney-General of Manitoba.

(83) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 22, 1884.

of magisterial power. (84)

Frank Oliver was an aggressive and public-spirited man, with a vigorous interest in the potentialities and development of the Edmonton district. No matter of local concern escaped his attention or failed to be dealt with in his paper. Pointing out that, "It takes on an average ten weeks to get a reply to a letter sent to Winnipeg or Ontario . . . while a letter to Macleod will perhaps bring back a reply in from three to four months," he campaigned for a better mail service. (85) He was the leading spirit in a mass meeting held in the Edmonton Hotel early in 1881 to take action on local matters. After taking steps to secure the services of a doctor for the settlement, framing a petition for a semi-monthly mail service, and wording a telegram to the government demanding an inquiry into district Indian administration, the meeting broke up "with three cheers for the Bulletin." (86)

Oliver never tired of criticizing the "stupidity" of the government's Territorial "bureaucracy", nor of denouncing the petty irritations which it inflicted upon the North West

(84) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 6, 1886. This issue contains a spirited defence of Judge Travis of Calgary who was in difficulties because of his sincere attempt to uphold the law in that settlement.

(85) The Bulletin, Jan. 10, 1881.

(86) The Bulletin, Jan. 17, 1881.

A stinging editorial described how Ottawa settled its accounts with local settlers and traders by issuing cheques, with a three months' "deadline", on the Merchants' Bank in Winnipeg. (87) Allegations of political jobbery were not wanting. He flayed the government for letting out Mounted Police and Indian Department contracts to I.G. Baker & Co. of Macleod and to firms in Ottawa, while ignoring the claims of Edmonton traders. (88) He protested against the creation of Indian reserves close to settlements, and the establishment of the Mounted Police headquarters at Fort Saskatchewan instead of at Edmonton. (89)

His distrust of the Dominion's western administration was equalled only by his faith in the future of the North West in general and of the Edmonton district in particular. Edmonton he envisaged not only as a region rich in its own right, but as the gateway to an area of great potential wealth - the Peace River Country. Under the heading of "Petrified Facts" he discussed applications which had been made for charters for two Peace River railway companies. The most eligible country for settlement in the Dominion, he claimed, lay along their proposed route: from Milk River,

(87) The Bulletin, Feb. 7, 1881.

(88) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 21, 1881.

(89) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 18, 1882.

on the International Boundary, to Peace River five hundred miles north of Edmonton. With high enthusiasm he described the land, the climate, the soil, the timber; and he called attention to coal deposits ("the most extensive known in the world"), gold, good water, fish, ideal stock-raising land and rivers suitable for navigation. "Although there is not enough wealth now in all this part of the country to build ten miles of the road, the time will come when the Peace River Railway will be built, and then - wild as the prospect seems now - people will say, 'Why wasn't it done long ago?'" (90)

Articles of this tone are very numerous in the early Bulletin, and are plentifully interspersed with demands for an aggressive immigration policy and with advice to prospective immigrants. Enthusiastic articles "booming" the country are, of course, a prominent feature in pioneer journals. But Oliver never descended to careless reporting, to mis-informing his readers, nor to painting a "get rich quick" picture of the North West. Occasionally, stirred by outside criticism, he allowed himself to be carried away; generally he kept his feet planted firmly on the ground. His own

(90) The Bulletin, Feb. 14, 1881.

See also, Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 14, 1881 - "Climate"; Apr. 4, 1881 - "Coal"; Nov. 19, 1881 - "The Future of the North West"; July 22, 1882 - "Immigrants"; June 22, 1884 - "Edmonton District"; July 5, 1884 - "The Peace River District".

articles and editorials on the land, as well as those reports written by others for publication in the Bulletin, were characterized by an unusual wealth of detail and authenticity of material. The advantages and disadvantages of the country were set forth at length; and, despite the prevailing note of optimism, a remarkable degree of penetration was evidenced in evaluating the natural factors governing agriculture and settlement. The prospective immigrant was not promised a land overflowing with milk and honey; but a land in which the resources and other natural advantages guaranteed a solid reward for patience, perseverance and hard work.

The following editorial reveals not only Oliver's faith in Edmonton and his eagerness to come to its defence, but the ironic flavor which is found in much of his writing. It was written in reply to a Toronto Globe reporter who visited Edmonton and who, upon his return East, enquired in a Globe article why settlers should "pass up" so many fine locations in the North West to take up land in such a remote and unsuitable spot as the Edmonton district.

Let Us Move

What in the world are we doing here? Let us git up and git. Let us go to the Touchwood Hills, or the Big Salt Plains, or Gabriel's Crossing, or Battleford, or Macleod, or the top of the Rocky Mountains - any where

to get away from this condemned spot. What fools these people are who have passed all those Edens to come here, and whom money could not induce to go back to them. Let us lose no time, but be up and away before these "monstrous swamps of rich black **leam**" shall have engulfed us, and before those phenomenal crops of which he speaks shall have had another opportunity to deceive us. Let us away to some place where shot-guns are used instead of harrows for planting the grain, and where the farms are on edge so that we can cultivate both sides of them, as in the Touchwood Hills. Let us go to Bow River where the snow was three feet deep on the 6th of April last and fifteen inches on the 8th of October, or to Gabriel's Crossing or Battleford where the "rich, black loam" is blown about with every breeze, or to the great southern plains where the artesian well would have to tap the ocean on the other side to get water. What do our misguided people mean by bringing plows and harrows, reapers and mowers, binders and threshers, grist mills and saw mills to a place so utterly unfit for farming, not to say for the habitation of man, in preference to other places, especially when it costs twice as much to bring them here? Why is it that, although the railroad is 800 miles off, with no prospect of it coming within 200 miles, a squatter's right to 100 acres of such country is worth \$10,000 cash? Either the people here are very badly mistaken or the *Globe* man is." (91)

To Frank Oliver the "fertile belt" was the valley of the Saskatchewan; and Edmonton, the last remote outpost settlement of its upper reaches, was the future agricultural and industrial centre of the West. "As Artemus Ward said of his show we say of our country, 'It is equalled by few and excelled by none!'" (92)

(91) *Edmonton Bulletin*, Mar. 11, 1882.

Regarding the \$10,000 for 100 acres, note that this was written during the "boom".

(92) *Edmonton Bulletin*, Apr. 8, 1882.

In the spring of 1882 the Bulletin called attention to the mounting land "boom", and the editor exhorted his fellow citizens to make the rising land values "conducive to the general prosperity of the district, and not just to the individual." (93) With the progress of the survey at that time his advice was, not to hold the lots for speculation, but to build on them and expand the town - "Not just sit back and expect the place to grow." (94) With those who lost when the "boom" collapsed he had scant sympathy: "It serves the speculators right if they merely bought in anticipation of a higher price." (95)

He devoted much of his time and the columns of his paper to various local interests: the agricultural society, (96) securing a resident doctor, (97) education, (98) roads, (99) and the incorporation of the settlement under a North West ordinance. (100) He advocated the domestication of the

(93) Edmonton Bulletin, Apr. 8, 1882.

(94) Edmonton Bulletin, Apr. 29, 1882.

(95) Edmonton Bulletin, June 7, 1882.

(96) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 9, 1882.

(97) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 21, 1882.

(98) The Bulletin, Jan. 24, 1881.

(99) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 1, 1882.

(100) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 16, 1882; Dec. 8, 1883.

buffalo to utilize certain areas of the Great Plains and help solve the Indian problem. (101)

Oliver was an ardent prohibitionist (102) and never missed an opportunity to condemn the use and abuse of liquor in the North West. Citing the disgraceful situation of the old "liquor days" around the Fort with their sidelights of Indian squalor, starvation and drunken murder, he firmly supported the principle of North West prohibition, (103) and demanded the maintenance of a strong police force for its enforcement. (104) He denounced Premier Norquay of Manitoba for allegedly "pandering to the liquor interests" by granting licenses in that province. "Let prohibition

(101) Steps were taken in this direction many years later when the conservation and attempted domestication of the buffalo became a policy of Oliver's Ministry of the Interior.

(102) Oliver never used either liquor or tobacco. It is interesting to note that both George Brown and Alexander Mackenzie, Grit Prime Minister of the 'seventies, were strong temperance men. "Macdonaldism" was far from being identified with the temperance cause.

(103) Liquor could be brought into the Territories only for "medicinal purposes" and then only on a permit from the Lieutenant-Governor. The looseness of the permit system and the activities of the whiskey-runners, not to mention the unpopularity of the law itself, rendered "prohibition" rather farcical in the North West during the 'seventies and 'eighties.

MacInnis, C.M. In the Shadow of the Rockies London 1930 p. 105 ff.

(104) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 28, 1881.

become a political issue," he challenged, concluding his attack on Norquay with an out and out condemnation of the liquor traffic. (105) To the twin principles of temperance and prohibition Oliver held with the zeal and fire of a crusader.

The term "public opinion" may be misleading when used with reference to the North West of the Bulletin's early days. The population was small and scattered - an almost insignificant encroachment upon the vastness and loneliness of the plains. The average settler or trader was too isolated and too busy making a living to be concerned with abstract "political" grievances. But neither he nor the inhabitant of the tiny village, where "politics" had already taken root, needed to be politically-minded to know that many of their practical grievances arose from the Dominion's western policies and administration and might be remedied by sympathetic governmental action. At any rate, upon such public opinion as did exist in the North West, the Bulletin exercised a considerable influence, and doubtless assisted, in no small measure, in curbing the more flagrant abuses of the Territorial bureaucracy. This does not mean that all readers of the Bulletin were unanimous in its support, nor that all North Westers subscribed to the uncompromising

(105) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 2, 1882.

See also the Bulletin, Nov. 4, 1882, for a strong statement upholding prohibition as then operative in the North West.

views of its editor. The very intensity of Oliver's opinions and the virulence with which they were expressed precluded that possibility. He had detractors and opponents enough, as a small army of critics was only too willing to testify. But this worried him not at all. He was a man who thrived in an atmosphere of conflict - proud of his friends, but proud, too, of the enemies he made. It was difficult to take the Bulletin in moderation; in fact, it was sometimes said that Bulletin readers were of only two classes: those who swore by the paper, and those who swore at it.

Frank Oliver did not long confine his participation in public affairs to the role of newspaper proprietor and journalist. His election to the North West Council for the District of Edmonton in 1883 marked the beginning of an active political career that was to extend over nearly half a century.

The government of the North West evolved from a series of acts beginning with the Rupert's Land Act of 1869. (106) This act provided for the appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor who should make provision for the administration of justice, establish institutions and ordinances subject to the ratification of the Canadian parliament, and set up

(106) Statutes of Canada, 32-33 Vict. c 3, An Act for the Temporary Government of Rupert's Land.

a council of from seven to fifteen persons to assist him in the administration. When the Province of Manitoba was created in 1870, the Rupert's Land Act continued to apply to the remainder of the Territories; the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba also served as Governor of the Territories and was responsible for its administration under direction from the Dominion Government. "During the years 1873-5 a provisional government, consisting of the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and his North West Council, ruled from Fort Garry (Winnipeg), and laid the early foundations of Territorial administration, while the newly established Department of the Interior maintained oversight from Ottawa." (107) Lands, natural resources, Indian affairs and the North West Mounted Police were reserved to the control of the Dominion Government.

The distinctive political career of the North West Territories commenced with the passage by the Dominion Parliament of the North West Territories Act, 1875. This act provided that the administration of the government in the Territories should be placed in the hands of a resident lieutenant-governor, assisted by a North West Council of not more than 5 persons, appointed by the Governor-General in Council and invested with both executive and legislative powers. The legislative powers included taxation for local and municipal purposes; property and civil rights; administration of justice; public health; police, roads, highways and bridges; and generally

(107) Lingard, C.C. Territorial Government in Canada
Toronto 1946 p. 4.

all matters of a purely local and private nature. An ingenious section of the Act further provided that when the Lieutenant-Governor was satisfied that any portion of the Territories, not exceeding one thousand square miles, contained a population of not less than one thousand persons of adult age, exclusive of aliens or unenfranchized Indians, he was to erect such portion into an electoral district, which would thenceforth be entitled to elect a member to the Council. When the number of elected members should reach twenty-one, the Council should cease to exist and the elected members should be designated the Legislative Assembly. (108)

No provision was made for Territorial representation in the Dominion House of Commons or Senate.

North West government, between the years 1870 and 1875, was carried on under the successive administrations of Lieutenant-Governors Archibald and Morris of Manitoba. In 1876 the Hon. David Laird was appointed first Territorial Lieutenant-Governor, and the seat of the North West government was moved from Winnipeg to Livingston, Swan River, in the North West Territories. The next year the capital was transferred to Battleford; and in 1882, with the southern diversion of the C.P.R. route, to Regina. The history of the Territorial government during these years is a story in itself. Despite its narrowly restricted powers the North West Council attacked its problems with vigor and determination, laying a solid groundwork of local legislation. In

(108) Lingard, op. cit., p. 4.

its relations with the Territorial administration the Dominion government consistently revealed mismanagement, and that attitude of apathy and procrastination all too common in its dealings with the West. (109)

The first electoral district under the provisions of the Act of 1875 was erected in 1881. This was the Electoral District of Lorne. Its member, the Hon. Laurence Clarke, Hudson's Bay Company factor at Fort Carlton, sat in the fourth session of the North West Council in May and June of 1881, as the first elected Councillor in the history of the North West. (110) The second elected member of the North West Council was Frank Oliver of Edmonton.

The Bulletin displayed its interest in the North West government as early as December, 1880. Referring to the local census then being taken, the editor declared himself as certain that the district contained more than the necessary population (111) and appealed to everyone to get his name on the census in order that Edmonton might elect a representative to the North West Council.

We must have a representative to that body - we are rapidly growing in numbers and should have our say in matters pertaining to the Territories and this section in particular.

(109) Black, op. cit., Chapters XIII, XV and XVIII.
MacInnes, op. cit., Chapters XVI and XVII.

(110) J.N.W. Council, 1881, pp. 5 and 6.

(111) That is, for erection into an electoral district.

Let us see if we cannot remedy this state of affairs by sending a good lively man to Battleford to speak for us. (112)

Much to the disappointment of the settlement, the census showed fewer than the required one thousand voters. Oliver momentarily changed front, charging that "a representative on the North West Council would not be much good anyway." Claiming that the real need was a representative to Ottawa, he suggested the division of the West into four sections with a federal representative in each. "Why should a man, by moving from one part of Canada to another, become disenfranchized?" (113)

Succeeding the Hon. David Laird, the Hon. Edgar Dewdney was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories on December 3, 1881. Oliver's reaction to the appointment spoke for itself:

Vive Le Roi

In regard to the appointment of Mr. Dewdney as Lieutenant-Governor of the North West, we have only to say that our opinion, if expressed of Mr. Dewdney's fitness for the position, would leave us open to charges of libel, and if the principle the greater the truth the greater the libel held good, we fear the financial resources of the Bulletin would be unable to stand the strain likely to be put upon them. (114)

(112) The Bulletin, Dec. 20, 1880.

(113) The Bulletin, Jan. 31, 1881.

(114) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 10, 1881.

He was not slow in pointing out what he considered to be the chief weakness of the North West Council as then constituted: the appointed members were men who were already officials of the Dominion Government. Two recent appointees were the Commissioner of the Mounted Police and the Assistant Indian Commissioner. (115) "A mere apology for a legislative body," he dubbed the Council, adding, "If there is any necessity for a Council it should be representative and elective, should have full control of local matters, and should be of a form that would entail the least expense" (116) Furthermore, "If such a council cannot be given for the whole Territories, the people of this district, who have no representative in the present council, should attempt the organization of a municipality and attend to their local affairs in their own way." (117)

At an important public meeting held in January, 1883, to consider land grievances, Oliver played a leading part. As one of his contributions to the business he moved the following resolution: "That this opportunity be taken to lay before the government the claims of the people of these

(115) Lieut.-Col. Irvine, N.W.M.P. and Hayter Reed of Battleford.

(116) Edmonton Bulletin, June 3, 1882.

(117) *Ibid*

territories to representation in the Canadian parliament" (118)

In its "telegraphic column" of March 24, 1883, the Bulletin reported that proclamations had been published erecting Edmonton into an electoral district, and in the next issue the editor expressed his gratification that the district was soon to have a representative on the North West Council. His satisfaction was, however, tempered by his recognition of the limited powers of the Territorial government. Although representation in the Council "might not amount to much", his advice was to get all possible advantage from it. "It is not probable," he stated, "that only one more elected member will be able to accomplish very great things under such circumstances. But if a true man of energy and ability be sent, he cannot fail to have some effect for good." (119)

What this "true man of energy and ability" might do included pressing the fight to obtain for Edmonton certain badly needed public works, and for the North West Council more power, particularly with reference to the establishment of schools and municipalities. Indirectly, local representation was "an admission by the general government of our existence as lawful settlers - the first official one that has

(118) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 27, 1883.

(119) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 31, 1883.

ever been made." The chief weakness of the Council was that "owing to the fact of its being representative rather of the general government than of the people of the North West, its efforts on behalf of the country have been few and weak, if any were ever made at all." The time had come, Oliver warned, when changes must be made. "Edmonton's man" must have honesty of purpose, energy of character, and must "be depended upon to act entirely in the interests of the people here." (120)

To the consternation of a community all agog over its first elections, a delay occurred in issuing the writs. With rather uncharitable candour Oliver speculated as to causes. "The delay in issuing the writs," he wrote, "may or may not be intentional, and if intentional may be with good or bad intent. In any case Mr. Dewdney is a gentleman who is none the worse of watching." (121) Meanwhile he urged his fellow citizens to "keep a bright lookout that no fluke or turn is made that will constitute an unworthy resident or an outside carpet-bagger the accredited representative of Edmonton." (122) The writs finally came through, and with notice in the Bulletin of May 5, 1883, of the names of several prospective candidates, Edmonton's first election

(120) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 31, 1883.

(121) Edmonton Bulletin, Apr. 7, 1883.

(122) *Ibid*

campaign got under way.

Messrs. S.D. Mulkins, M. Macaulay, James McKernan and F. Oliver are candidates for election to the North West Council, with several outlying districts to hear from. . . . Editorials giving any candidate fits supplied at double the ordinary advertising rates. (123)

It was a rather confusing campaign. The official nomination day was not until May 15; but meanwhile, as reported by the Bulletin, several names appeared which were later withdrawn. There seems to have been a laudable ambition on the part of Edmonton's more public-spirited men to be the settlement's first representative on the North West Council, and each aspirant found ready backing from a small coterie of friends whose enthusiasm for their candidate perhaps outran their knowledge of electoral procedure.

In a Bulletin advertisement of May 5, Stuart D. Mulkins, Notary Public and a staunch Conservative, appealed to the electors to support his candidature. He stressed local questions including schools, public works, incorporation and fair settlement of half-breed scrip. (124) Frank Oliver in the same issue claimed for the Edmonton settlement, "a slice of the \$20,000 placed in the Canadian estimates for expenditure in the North West by the Council for public works." In offering himself as candidate he promised aggressive action on schools and municipal incorporation; and

(123) Edmonton Bulletin, May 5, 1883.

(124) Ibid

advocated abrogation of timber dues, more equitable home-
stead and pre-emption rights for settlers, and an adequate
solution of the questions of half-breed scrip and land ten-
ure. (125)

Oliver's attitude on Dominion issues was already well known and had been especially emphasized in an editorial in which he reiterated his political non-partisanship. Expressing his whole-hearted opposition to the Conservatives, he denied that he belonged to the reform or Grit party. (126) So long, he stated, as the principles advocated by that party suited him, he supported them. However, if the Grits were changing their tune on the National Policy, the Syndicate bargain or the colonization societies, and if these things were no longer obnoxious to them, what claim had the Grit party on his support over that of the Conservatives? "We support principles, not men," he repeated, and urged that there was "time enough for the people of the North West to profess allegiance to either of these parties when they get representation in the Dominion House. . . . And when that time comes, it is to be hoped they will support a more national, and less sectional, policy than either of those parties now advocates." (127)

(125) Edmonton Bulletin, May 5, 1883.

(126) Ibid

(127) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 10, 1883.

Mr. Francis Lamoureaux of Fort Saskatchewan soon entered the field, representing the interests of that settlement and St. Albert. (128) Oliver deprecated Lamoureaux's candidature as threatening to raise sectional and religious issues, and made a strong plea for minimizing racial, religious and sectional bitterness in the contest and uniting against the common danger - the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Co. (129) Actually, the local voters saw a danger in the way the contest then stood. With the probability of the Edmonton vote being split between Oliver, Mulkins and Macaulay, the relative "outsider", Lamoureaux, had an excellent chance of being elected. Edmonton's awareness of this unpleasant possibility was revealed in a public meeting held on May 10. The announced purpose of the meeting was to give the candidates, Macaulay, Oliver and Mulkins, "and others who may so desire", an opportunity to address the electors. However, no sooner had the meeting opened than a resolution, apparently inspired by Macaulay and prepared unbeknown to the other candidates, was proposed for consideration. Its tenor was that, "whereas from the action of another portion of this district it is advisable not to divide the vote of Edmonton and vicinity" the meeting should immediately pick one candidate to represent it in the election.

(128) Edmonton Bulletin, May 12, 1883. St. Albert was the Métis settlement several miles North West of Edmonton.

(129) Edmonton Bulletin, May 12, 1883.

Since such action was not the announced purpose of the meeting and since no prior understanding had been arrived at among the candidates, Oliver refused to bind himself. Mulkins said he would abide by the decision of the meeting, and took occasion to declare himself a Conservative, to express his opinion that the Conservative government was "the best we have ever had", and to urge at some length his personal qualifications. A sharp discussion followed, and it was finally decided to hear each of the candidates and then vote on their popularity.

Macaulay dealt chiefly with local matters and declared that he would fight for everything the North West wanted. Oliver's speech referred, not only to the usual local matters of public works, schools, municipal organization, etc., but also to the organization and powers of the North West Council and the possibility of reform in Territorial administration. He warmly defended prohibition in the North West. Denying that he was an extremist, he promised that "as he had been in the past, so he would be in the future." Mulkins added to his platform on local affairs a repetition of his adherence to the Conservative party and boasted of all it had done in opening up the country. "If sent to Regina," he stated, "he would go as a supporter of that government and thought he would gain more for his constituents by doing so than if he went as a pronounced opponent to it."

Of the three speeches, at least as reported in the Bulletin, that given by Oliver was the most lengthy and impressive. Macaulay stressed local conditions; Mulkins, his affiliations with the Conservative party. Oliver displayed a wider interest in North West government and administrative reform, and perhaps a broader conception of Territorial problems and their possible solution. At any rate, when the speechmaking was over,

A somewhat lengthy and acrimonious discussion followed in which Messrs. Macaulay, Oliver, Mulkins, Bleecker, Kippen, McDonald, Dr. Munroe and others took part, in regard to the calling of the meeting and a few other little matters which required ventilation. Finally, an open vote as to the popularity of the different candidates was taken which showed twelve for Macaulay, forty-two for Oliver and twenty-two for Mulkins.

The meeting then adjourned. (130)

Macaulay forthwith dropped out of the running; but Mulkins, despite his earlier assertion that he would abide by the decision of the meeting, stayed in. Nominations were duly made in the school house on May 15, with Capt. J. Gagnon as returning officer. Despite a last minute rally of Oliver supporters to secure his acclamation, the close of nominations revealed three candidates officially in the field: Oliver, Mulkins and Lamoureaux. A fair sized crowd being present, a meeting to discuss issues was held immediately under the chairmanship of J. McDonald.

Lamoureaux spoke very briefly, promising that if elected he would do the best he could, and that he would not "pull" for Fort Saskatchewan. Mulkins reiterated his belief that as a Conservative he was the logical man, and that a representative bitter against the government should not be sent to Regina. ("The proceedings were varied at this point by a first class dog fight in the school room. So far as learned no money changed hands on the result. Both dogs were kicked out and quiet reigned once more.") Oliver in a forceful speech added little to his platform, but was attacked violently by H. Bleecker, a barrister and supporter of Mulkins, for his Bulletin articles against the Conservative government and the C.P.R. Bleecker claimed with considerable feeling that, "Mr. Oliver was against everyone in authority. He had abused the public men of the country from the Governor-General down to the postmaster. If his paper had been of any weight or had been read by members of the government, he would have been prosecuted for libel." (131) He went on to accuse the Bulletin's editor of being a "speculative squatter", of making utterly unjustified attacks on Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney, and of being inconsistent in his stand on the liquor laws. Oliver defended himself with his customary vigor, and cleverly diverted the

(131) Edmonton Bulletin, May 19, 1883.

attention of the meeting by producing a witness who allegedly had heard Bleecker say that "if Mulkins were elected it would be a disgrace to the country." With biting irony he praised Bleecker for quoting the Bulletin. Amid a general atmosphere of "mud-slinging" and name calling, the meeting finally broke up.

With the field cleared for the three official candidates electioneering proceeded at a lively pace. Although personal and sectional animosities were not wanting, subsequent meetings held throughout the district were apparently conducted in an orderly fashion. The Bulletin appealed to the electors to get out and vote, and to judge each candidate by his past deeds and present capabilities. "What is wanted," the Bulletin maintained, "is a man who whether bound by pledge or not can be depended upon to stand by the interests of the district and of the people who inhabit it, without distinction of creed, race, party or place of residence, through thick and thin, through evil and good report, ably and honorably as long as he holds the position of their authorized representative." (132) Private canvassing was advocated. "Every elector who has strong convictions should try to persuade the luke warm or indifferent to vote for 'his man'." (133)

(132) Edmonton Bulletin, May 19, 1883.

(133) Edmonton Bulletin, May 26, 1883.

Election day, May 29, witnessed intense excitement in the district. There were three polls - Edmonton, St. Albert and Fort Saskatchewan. Voting was done orally. Each elector appeared before the returning officer, gave his name, his occupation and place of residence, and stated his choice of candidate. If required by the adherents of an opposing party, he was compelled to take the qualifications oath or the bribery oath or both. The former was an avowal that he was a resident householder duly qualified to vote; the latter that he had received no bribe, directly or indirectly, as the price of his preference. The polls were quiet and orderly, and although some liquor was in evidence in Edmonton, the presence of the police no doubt dampened the enthusiasm of potential trouble makers.

Oliver took and kept the lead in Edmonton, while in Fort Saskatchewan Lamoureaux's adherents piled up a large majority. Mulkins had no show. The outcome in St. Albert appeared for some time in doubt, the count swinging between Oliver and Lamoureaux. During the afternoon, the "Mulkins faction", seeing that their cause was lost, allegedly began "throwing their votes" to Lamoureaux. (134) Shortly after five o'clock the overall report of the polls showed

(134) Edmonton Bulletin, June 2, 1883.

a resounding victory for Oliver with a final count of Oliver 154, Lamoureux 94, and Mulkins 4. (135)

The total number of votes cast may appear small in proportion to the "one thousand persons of adult age" required for the erection of Edmonton into an electoral district. There is some reason to believe that the minimum population requirement had not been strictly interpreted in creating the Edmonton electorate. (136) In addition there had been some local dispute regarding the interpretation of "householder" as establishing eligibility to vote. Limiting factors such as isolation, primitive roads and seasonal farm work must also be taken into account. The result of Edmonton's first election does reasonably suggest that a large number of residents agreed with the "rampant Grit" Frank Oliver in his criticism of the Dominion's western policies and Territorial administration.

Oliver's own review of the election issues and results is interesting. He charged that his opponents had no definite constructive policy of their own, but were merely out "to beat Oliver". He denounced as puerile the contention

(135) The Canadian Parliamentary Companion Ed. J.A. Gemmill Ottawa 1885 p. 368.
(Hereafter referred to as Can. Parl. Comp., with year of issue.)

(136) Oliver himself stated years later that Edmonton probably lacked the required number of persons.

that Mulkins could get more out of Regina than he himself could, and blamed the bitterness of the opposition on the activities of the anti-prohibitionists. "It would be useless to deny that throughout the larger part of the district there were persistent attempts made to set race against race, creed against creed, and section against section, but in all cases without success." "But," he stated in conclusion, "the men and their principles were what the electors voted on." (137)

(137) Edmonton Bulletin, June 2, 1883.

Chapter 4 Member of the North West Council

The last meeting of Lieutenant-Governor Laird's Council, with its four appointed and one elected member (1) at Battleford in May and June of 1881, marked in a real sense the end of an era. Great changes were taking place in the North West as the relative stagnation of Laird's regime gave way to increasing activity in surveys, immigration and railway construction. In May of 1882 the Dominion Government divided the West into four provisional districts - Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Athabasca, chiefly for the convenience of the Postal Department. During 1883 several new electoral districts were erected under the provisions of the Act of 1875.

Although appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories in December of 1881, the Hon. Edgar Dewdney did not summon the North West Council until 1883. The delay was occasioned by a dispute concerning the powers of the Council, the choice of a new Capital, rumors of the creation of two new provinces, and Dewdney's expressed desire to "have the assistance of representative men from different parts of the

(1) The elected member was the Hon. Laurence Clarke, District of Lorne.

Territories" to assist him in the administration. (2)

The North West Council which assembled in Regina on August 22, 1883, not only faced a heavy backlog of legislation and many new problems, but differed drastically in composition and temper from its predecessor. Lieut.-Cols. Richardson and Macleod, stipendiary magistrates, continued to sit as "ex-officio" members, (3) and together with Pascal Bréland, appointed member, (4) formed the "old guard" of the Council. Recent appointees were Lieut.-Col. Irvine and Hayter Reed, Assistant Indian Commissioner. Since Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney had a vote, the "non-elective" membership of the Council was six. Captain D.H. Macdowall replaced Clarke as elected member for Lorne. Frank Oliver of Edmonton and the four other members from the newly erected electoral districts completed the elective group on the Council. (5)

- (2) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 8. The five new electoral districts were erected during the first half of 1883, and three of the elections were held as late as August 13. To include the newly elected members, calling the session was delayed.
- (3) Both had served since 1877.
- (4) First appointed in 1878.
- (5) Oliver was elected on May 29, 1883; Macdowall on June 5, 1883; and the others on August 13, 1883. This substantiates Oliver's position as second elected member to the North West Council, he being preceded only by Clarke, District of Lorne.

Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney, already prominent in the western service of the Dominion government, was to have a long and varied public career. (6) An ultra-conservative, he was the perpetual target of Frank Oliver who mercilessly denounced and lampooned him with an intensity of political and even personal animosity which only deepened with time. Not everyone, however, was inclined to be as critical as the Bulletin's editor, and it is only fair to suggest another side to the picture:

The governor has been very zealous as regards legislation, and when he had occasion to speak, spoke with force and clearness - more force and clearness than we should have expected from one so reticent in his habitual demeanor. Even persons disposed to regard him with hostile feelings acknowledge that throughout he has displayed breadth and grasp, readiness and statesmanlike instincts. (7)

Col. Richardson was a mild mannered man of conscientious ability and conservative views, while Col. James Macleod's colorful personality and undoubted talents were to win him a distinguished career in the judicial field and a high place in the estimation of his associates. Pascal Breland, a French-Canadian, was considered to represent the Métis

(6) Dewdney's public career included: Indian Commissioner for the North West; Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories; Member of Parliament for Assiniboia East; Minister of the Interior, and Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia.

(7) Nicholas Flood Davin (Cons.) in the Regina Leader, quoted from Black, op. cit., p. 233.

interests. Lieut.-Col. Irvine's duties as N.W.M.P. officer kept him often absent from the Council. Hayter Reed's position in the Indian Department made him, supposedly, an authority on Indian problems.

Captain Macdowall was a business man and a staunch conservative. Hamilton, District of Broadview, was a Scotch gentleman farmer much concerned with practical problems.

"The squatters' candidate", White of Regina, revealed a keen interest in agricultural questions. Jackson of Qu'Appelle, whose hostility to Dewdney and to Regina were well known, did not prove the firebrand anticipated, but rather a "decorous and assiduous" Councillor. From Moose Jaw came a young rancher of ambition and spirit, soon to be closely associated with Oliver in the fight for reform, the fiery James Ross. (8)

N.F. Davin's estimate of Frank Oliver, as given in the Regina Leader soon after the assembling of the North West Council of 1883, is particularly interesting:

One member we have not yet mentioned, perhaps the most remarkable man, in some respects, on the Council, Mr. Oliver of Edmonton. If this gentleman is a type of the people of Edmonton, we take the people of Edmonton to our hearts, for Mr. Oliver is a man not only of independent thought and great natural ability, but

(8) These brief characterizations are from N.F. Davin in the Regina Leader, quoted from Black, op. cit., p. 232 ff.

a man of transparent honesty. Such men the free air of the North West breeds. (9)

The time was not far distant when, in the heat of political controversy, Davin and the Regina Leader were to give a much less generous characterization of this "untamed broncho" from the Upper Saskatchewan. (10)

(9) Ibid Davin was a brilliant speaker, journalist and politician. Oliver and Davin were subsequently political rivals.

(10) The following anecdote is taken from John Hawkes' The Story of Saskatchewan Chicago-Regina 1924 p. 500.

"The appointed members of the Council exceeded the elected members in number and the Lieutenant-Governor and the three stipendiary magistrates formed a friendly little conclave which settled everything among themselves - to the immense indignation of Frank Oliver of Edmonton. Motion after motion would, with monotonous regularity, be "moved" by Judge Richardson, "seconded" by Judge Rouleau, while Judge Macleod would say "carried".

"And what do you think of the proceedings today?" asked stipendiary Richardson, in his mild thin voice, of Mr. Oliver.

"Same d----d thing as usual," snapped back Oliver. "Moved by J---s, seconded by C----t, and carried by G-d!"

Hawkes offers this as an "old timer's" reminiscence, and it apparently refers to the session of 1884. However, it reveals a discrepancy in that Judge Rouleau is termed a member of the Council at a time when "the appointed members exceeded the elected members in number." Perhaps the "old timer" was referring to occasions when some of the elected members were absent, or perhaps he was garbling the story slightly. At any rate, as a characterization of Oliver the anecdote bears a stamp of authenticity which forbids its omission.

Oliver was already well known throughout the North West as a "political firebrand", and his role in the Council did much to justify that appellation.

The elective members of the Council made their presence felt immediately. In the Address in Reply to Lieut.-Gov. Dewdney's business-like and rather non-committal Speech from the Throne, (11) the Council requested His Honor,

To consider with us the best means that can be adopted to convince the Dominion Government of the necessity that exists of some definite action being taken with regard to those matters on which repeated memorials have been presented by the people, as well as matters and complaints which have arisen as the result of more recent legislation by the Federal authorities. (12)

This statement constituted, in effect, a plea for greater legislative scope and a condemnation of "meddlesome interference" from Ottawa. (13)

The Council then proceeded to appoint a Select Committee composed of the six elected members to memorialize the Dominion Government on North West grievances. The Memorial, of sixteen sections, was duly drafted and submitted for consideration by the Council. An amendment, moved by Jackson and seconded by Oliver, alleging the illegality of colonization company agents acting as government agents was

(11) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 6 ff.

(12) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 15.

(13) These were the two chief grievances dealt with in previous memorials.

lost on the adverse vote of the appointed members strengthened by Dewdney's casting vote, and the Memorial was accepted. Its protests covered a wide field, including a plea for the land rights of the half-breeds, a condemnation of Dominion land policy and a demand for Territorial representation in the Federal Parliament. (14)

Oliver played a prominent part in the deliberations of the Select Committee, but it would be a mistake to over-emphasize his direct contribution to the framing of the Memorial. He was but one man in six. However, it is significant that of the sixteen grievances framed and agreed upon by these six men of diverse political allegiances and backgrounds, and passed by the Council, every one had for some time been urged in the columns of the Edmonton Bulletin.

Apart from the Memorial and frequent clashes between the appointed and elected members, the Council session of 1883 was quiet as compared with sessions to come. A good deal of useful legislation was achieved. (15) Oliver's most important constructive efforts were directed to paving the way for effective legislation on schools.

(14) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 39 ff; pp. 55 and 56.

(15) Ordinances of the North West Territories 1878-1887
 Printer to the Government of the North West Territories Regina
 See Ordinances of 1883.

The North West Territories Act of 1875 empowered the Territorial authorities to pass necessary ordinances in respect to education, and made provision for minority rights, whether of Protestants or Catholics. In practice the "school system" of the North West was in 1883 still very inadequate. Under the auspices of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches a number of church or mission schools had been established. Some "public" schools did exist, but sparseness of population and frontier conditions, together with inadequate finances, undeveloped curricula and scarce and poorly qualified teachers rendered them relatively ineffective. The Act of 1875 made no provision for local taxation except in districts achieving "electoral status". The North West Council lacked the power of direct taxation, while Federal assistance to schools was sporadic and inadequate. (16) The establishment of a proper North West school system was overdue.

Oliver was keenly interested in the school question. (17) On September 13, 1883, he was given leave by the Council to bring in a "Bill providing for the Organization of Public and Separate School Districts in the North West Territories." (18) He presented the bill and it was referred to a special committee consisting of Oliver, Ross, Macleod and

(16) Black, *op. cit.*, p. 198 and p. 561 ff.
Lingard, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

(17) Edmonton Bulletin, 1880-1883, *passim*.

(18) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 33.

White. Throughout the session the committee worked on the bill, and it was several times reported and discussed at length in committee of the whole. It did not reach its final stages. On September 26 the bill was tabled, and ordered to be printed as reported by the committee and distributed. (19) Not only were there certain features of the bill upon which agreement could not be reached, but there were some doubts as to whether its passage lay within the powers of the North West Council. Copies of the printed bill were widely distributed during the ensuing year, and the results of Oliver's work are to be found in the School Bill as finally passed in the session of 1884. (20)

During the session of '83 Oliver took a firm stand on the prohibition issue. On August 28 Mr. White presented a petition from the residents of Regina requesting the Council to memorialize the Governor-General-in-Council that permission be granted to Henry Lejeune and James Brown of Regina to manufacture and sell ale and porter within the Territories. The petition was referred to a special committee of Messrs. White, Jackson, Hamilton, Ross and Oliver. (21) A few days later the committee reported in favor of

(19) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 58.

(20) Consideration of the School Bill of 1884 will appear in due course.

(21) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 17.

the petition, suggesting that the Council request the Dominion Government to empower it to issue licenses to parties for the purpose of manufacturing ales and porter within the Territories. Oliver, who fought the petition tooth and nail within the committee, claiming that prohibition had been an issue of his own election, (22) lodged a minority report of one:

It does not appear from such petition that any good and sufficient reason exists why Ales and Beer should be manufactured within the limits of the North West Territories, and . . . there is no reason why such a memorial should be made. Therefore it is recommended that no such memorial be drafted.

"Francis Oliver" (23)

When word got around Regina that the North West Council appeared kindly disposed toward the Lejeune and Brown

(22) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 6, 1883.

In the Edmonton Bulletin, June 2, 1883, the following statement appeared with reference to Oliver's winning the N.W.C. election: "It would be unfair to accuse Messrs. Mulkins and Lamoureux of pandering to the liquor interests of the place, but it is notorious that Mr. Oliver was opposed very bitterly because he was a prohibitionist. . . . Results must be most encouraging to those who favor prohibition."

(23) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 57.

The petition included a general appeal for relaxation of the liquor laws, and such statements as the following:

"Those of your petitioners who are physicians, druggists, and chemists state that alcohol is a necessity in the drug business for many purposes patients have been compelled to do without such liquors at great risk of their lives."

petition, the Rev. Alex Urquhart and others presented a counter-petition praying the Council not to memorialize Ottawa for permission to grant "beer licenses". Urquhart's petition was duly referred to the special committee which voted against it, reiterating its recommendation of a memorial requesting permission to grant beer manufacturing licenses. Oliver again lodged a minority report, claiming, "There is no valid reason for memorializing the Dominion Government on the above subject, but on the contrary there is every reason that the present prohibitory law should be maintained in its entirety." (24)

Prohibition and its enforcement was a live issue in the Territories and the Lejeune and Brown affair created some stir throughout the North West. It seems evident that Oliver in upholding prohibition was supporting the "unpopular" side, (25) and that the opinion most widely held was in favor of some local concession to brewing to minimize the abuses of the licensing system, to check "bootlegging" and to furnish a market for local barley. But Oliver stuck to

(24) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 57.

(25) At a public meeting in the spring of 1884 Oliver's own constituents moved and passed, over his warm protests, a motion favoring government licensing of breweries in the North West. Prohibition, as it existed in the 'eighties, was not popular in the Territories.

his guns. (26)

The special committee's recommendation in favor of the "beer memorial" was considered on September 26 and accepted by the Council. It is perhaps significant that the three men besides Oliver who voted against it were stipendiary magistrates Richardson and Macleod, and Lieut.-Col. Irvine, N.W.M.P. (27)

During the session Oliver introduced a measure in defence of squatters' rights entitled "a Bill to define the rights of occupants of Public Lands within the North West Territories." It was "killed" by the standing Committee on Civil Law, as being repugnant to Section 85 of the North West Territories Act of 1880. (28) His proposed "Bill respecting Masters and Servants" was also reported on adversely, the Law Committee claiming that the present Masters and Servants Act was satisfactory. (29) Oliver presented a

(26) Some remarkable arguments were advanced by the supporters of the Lejeune and Brown petition. One party made his plea in the interests of the immigrants' health. Newcomers, he claimed, were not accustomed to the water of the North West, and if they absorbed it in large quantities would suffer "a shock to their systems". Hence a need for plenty of beer and ale. With "beer advocates" such as this, and with those who stressed the "medicinal value" of alcohol, Oliver was particularly impatient. He charged them with hypocrisy and suggested that if they wanted to drink they could at least be honest about it.

(27) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 63.

(28) Ibid p. 45 and p. 60.

(29) Ibid p. 43 and pp. 59-60.

petition from the residents of Edmonton praying for incorporation as a municipality, and although the petition was approved, (30) it was to be some time before the settlement took advantage of its privilege under the enabling "Ordinance respecting Municipalities" passed by the Council in the same session. (31)

During the session Oliver kept his constituents informed of the proceedings by numerous despatches to the Bulletin, and soon after his return to Edmonton he summarized editorially the Council's achievements. He concluded by stating, "Considering the narrow limits of its powers and the degree of uncertainty as to what these powers actually were, a very creditable amount of work has been accomplished." (32)

At a well attended public meeting the following spring he outlined his part in the Council's deliberations. Calling attention to the useful legislation passed, he stressed the ordinance authorizing the erection of municipalities and urged that Edmonton should act upon it. He referred to his efforts on behalf of school legislation, and warmly defended his stand against the "beer memorial". He made light of the argument that the manufacture of beer would

(30) J.N.W. Council, 1883, p. 45.

(31) Ibid p. 64.

(32) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 27, 1883.

provide a worthwhile local market for barley. He concluded by advocating that the Council, although basically of little use, should be nurtured to the end of developing North West government. The general feeling of the meeting appeared to be that Edmonton's member had so far justified the faith of his supporters. (33)

As the time approached for the next session, Oliver called a public meeting to secure the opinion of his constituents on matters requiring attention by the Council. He had himself prepared several resolutions for consideration. The first of these, dealing with the powers and duties of the North West Council, alluded to matters which were to remain controversial not only during the life of that body, but on into the years of struggle between Lieut.-Gov. Royal and the Territorial Legislative Assembly which succeeded it. The resolution revealed a keen appreciation of the issue then shaping up in the contest between authoritarianism and responsible government in the North West:

It is the duty of the North West Council to see that all doubts as to its rights to deal fully with municipal and school matters should be removed at once; that the funds granted by the Federal government for the expenses of the government in the North West be placed for expenditure in the hands of the elected members of the Council, in their executive

(33) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 22, 1884.

capacity, as the responsible advisers of the Lieutenant-Governor; (34) that the annual grant to the North West should be increased proportionately to that paid the provinces; and that unless the Council in its legislative and executive capacities is placed in full control of municipal and educational matters and the funds for Territorial use, its further existence in those capacities is a sham. (35)

This resolution was moved by Oliver and carried by the meeting, which then voiced its approval of a further statement that it was inadvisable to separate the four provisional districts from each other and place each one under a petty provincial government, but that the time had arrived to warrant their being erected into a united province, under a responsible government, and having the same rights, powers and privileges as the other members of the Canadian Confederation; and further, that the necessity of allowing officials and appointees of the Federal Government a voice in the management of the affairs of the country had ceased, and the policy should be abandoned.

Other resolutions were adopted with remarkable unanimity calling for action on the Hudson's Bay Railway, condemning

(34) Dominion grants for expenditure in the North West were under the control of the Lieutenant-Governor. The Council had no power of direct taxation, and its funds were paltry. For example, in 1883 its total receipts, from fees, fines and licenses, amounted to \$2,674.50; its expenditures, consisting of payments to an acting orderly of the session and to two persons for registering marriage licenses, amounted to \$54.50. J.N.W. Council, 1883. Appendix A p. 71.

(35) Edmonton Bulletin, June 28, 1884.

colonization companies in general and the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Company in particular, stressing the need for improved communications, and advocating that the average attendance requirement qualifying schools for government aid be reduced from fifteen to ten pupils. Oliver and his constituents appeared to be in complete accord except on one question. Over his violent protests the meeting carried a resolution favoring government licensing of breweries in the North West. (36)

In the session of 1884 which opened on July 3, three additional members took their places in the Council. C.B. Rouleau, recently appointed stipendiary magistrate, joined Richardson and Macleod as an "ex-officio" member. The return of J.G. Turriff and J.D. Geddes from the newly created electoral districts of Moose Mountain and Calgary brought the elective strength of the Council to eight, a clear majority over the non-elective membership. Despite this shift in weight the Council, while re-affirming the grievances of the memorial of the preceding year, concentrated upon problems of practical legislation rather than upon questions of its own powers and limitations. The "firebrands" of the session were again Messrs. Oliver and Ross.

(36) Edmonton Bulletin, June 28, 1884.

In his opening speech Lieut.-Gov. Dewdney, while admitting the prevalence of whiskey smuggling, expressed himself as satisfied that there was little abuse of liquor imported on permits and re-affirmed his desire to see breweries established in the North West. He went on to assure the Council that the Indian situation gave no cause for alarm, and denounced the "exaggerated reports" of Indian unrest appearing in certain sections of the North West press. (37) On both these matters Oliver took exception to the Governor's statement, and on the liquor question he moved the following amendment to the Address in Reply:

That this Council regrets that it cannot agree with His Honor that very little abuse has been made of liquor permits granted in the Territories, and consider that this abuse has been so great as to prejudice the present prohibitory law in the minds of many of the inhabitants to such an extent as to imperatively call for a closer control by the authorities of all permits granted; and further, that this Council cannot agree with your Honor that the establishment of breweries would have the effect of stopping smuggling or illicit distilling to any extent, but rather that by giving the opportunity to the young of acquiring the appetite for alcoholic liquors would cause increased smuggling, illicit distilling and drunkenness. (38)

This amendment was lost 11 to 2, only Oliver and Turriff supporting it.

Speaking on Indian affairs Oliver called attention to

(37) Supra, pp. 59-60 for a quotation from Dewdney's speech.

(38) J.N.W. Council, 1884, pp. 16-17.

prevailing unrest among the natives near Broadview and Battleford, and urged that in all conscience the Council could not agree with the Lieutenant-Governor that the Indians were generally more contented than since Treaty Number 6 was made, and that it therefore should not acquiesce in his statement that Indian affairs were quiet. He warned that the Indians were getting out of hand, and recalled an ominous incident of the previous winter which would encourage them to defy the whites, "when Col. Herchmer and his men turned tail to a lot of breech-clouted savages." (39)

A large majority of the Council, however, apparently agreed with the Governor that Indian affairs were under control and that Oliver was an alarmist. The Address in Reply as passed stated that, "We are glad that Your Honor assures us of general contentment among the Indians in the Territories, notwithstanding the exaggerated reports which have been circulated much to the prejudice of the best interests of the country." (40) The Address in Reply also accepted with satisfaction Dewdney's assurances regarding the liquor permit system and breweries. (41)

(39) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 2, 1884. Report on N.W.C. A penetrating reference to the part played by Col. Herchmer and 40 Police at the outbreak at Crooked Lakes in February of 1884, when disgruntled Indians led by Yellow Calf successfully defied the Police. Stanley, op. cit., pp. 278-280 gives an account of the affair.

(40) J.N.W. Council, 1884, p. 18.

(41) Ibid

On the question of constitutional reform the Council appeared lukewarm while Oliver continued urgent and persistent. On July 24 he moved, seconded by Ross, a lengthy amendment to a committee report on finance. (42) Although largely a plea for increased Federal grants, the amendment included a strongly worded assertion of the Council's legislative and executive rights, including control of Dominion grants for North West expenditure. It was defeated 9 to 4 on the grounds that "the several questions and subjects dealt with in it are already provided for by reference to the Executive Council." (43) A few days later Oliver moved, (44) again seconded by Ross, a lengthy resolution setting forth in eight detailed sections the demands upon which he had received the approval of his constituents at his meeting with them in June. (45) He dutifully included, no doubt with considerable heart-burning, their plea for local breweries, (46) and in addition requested

(42) J.N.W. Council, 1884, pp. 47-48.

(43) Ibid p. 49.

(44) Ibid p. 60.

(45) Supra, pp. 104-106.

(46) This is rather difficult to reconcile with Oliver's uncompromising attitude on such matters. He maintained, of course, that he stood pledged to his constituents' interests, but where such a clash of opinion was evident he might have been expected to resign his seat rather than to give at the least tacit approval to this resolution.

the government to establish a wholly elective legislative assembly without waiting for the requisite twenty-one elected members. Jackson, seconded by Turriff, offered a substitute resolution stating, in effect, that the chief function of the Council was to legislate in accordance with its powers as laid down under the Acts of 1875 and 1880, that the memorial of the previous year fairly set forth the requirements of the Territories, and "that we believe the feeling of the country to be strongly against the introduction of party politics into the Council as well as against any action of the Council being taken in such a way that either Political Party in the Dominion Parliament could use it for political purposes." (47) Exactly who was trying to interject "party politics" into the Council is not altogether clear. At any rate, there were on the Council a number of staunch Conservatives who were not too fond of subscribing to blanket denunciations of Macdonald's Conservative Government. Oliver's resolution, if passed, would certainly have provided ammunition for a Federal opposition interested in using it. Jackson's resolution replacing Oliver's was passed, only Oliver and Ross voting against it. (48)

(47) J.N.W. Council, 1884, pp. 61-62.

(48) Ibid pp. 62-63.

On August 1 Oliver and Ross introduced a resolution criticizing Dominion land policy, and particularly the Land Department's continued failure to adjust squatters' rights on the Moose Jaw, Regina and Bell Farm Reserves with consequent grave injustices to the squatters. The last section was an interesting reiteration of the claim (49) that North West lands belonged, not to the Government of Canada, but to the British Crown, "to be administered by such of Her Majesty's representatives as may be deemed expedient and that as soon as Responsible Government is obtained by the North West it should be assumed by that Government. (50) White offered an amendment in which the adjustment of squatters' rights on the three reserves was urged with more restraint, and from which the last section referred to above was altogether omitted, and the Council, in referring the amendment to the "executive committee", effectively disposed of the original motion. (51)

The Council appeared willing to rest on its memorial of 1883, and where laws and regulations made by the Dominion were found unsuited to the requirements of the country, to make such representations to Ottawa as would induce the

(49) This claim was made frequently by Métis leaders of both the Red River and the Saskatchewan country.

(50) J.N.W. Council, 1884, p. 72.

(51) Ibid p. 73.

Federal House to legislate in the interests of the Territories. (52) Pre-occupied with a heavy program of practical legislation, it was not willing to go along with messrs. Oliver and Ross in the direction of radical constitutional reform.

The session devoted considerable time to Oliver's school bill, carried over from the previous year. Under Dominion Orders-in-Council the Lieutenant-Governor was already paying out of the Federal appropriation for the North West government half the salaries of the teachers engaged in ten Protestant and two Roman Catholic schools. It was unanimously agreed that the attendance requirement of fifteen pupils necessary to qualify a school for financial aid was too high, and that it was time to establish regular school districts with taxing power. Meanwhile, doubts as to the Council's power to legislate on schools had been removed.

Oliver presented his bill respecting schools on July 7 and it was referred to a select committee composed of Messrs. Rouleau, Macdowall, Turriff, Ross and Oliver. Some friction developed within the committee, and the following day Rouleau requested and received permission to introduce an act respecting schools which was forthwith referred to

(52) J.N.W. Council, 1884, pp. 61-62.

the same committee. On July 24 Rouleau, as committee chairman, reported, "Your committee beg leave to report that they have considered the two ordinances and have agreed to submit the present Ordinance and ask that it should be considered in Committee of the Whole." (53) The bill was then read for the first time. The special committee continued to labor over the bill, and it was considered by the Committee of the Whole on four subsequent occasions. On the first of these it was reported by Oliver, and on the other three by Rouleau. Finally, on August 6, the third reading of the bill entitled "An Ordinance providing for the organization of schools in the North West Territories" was moved by Rouleau and seconded by Macleod. It was passed, and signed by Lieut.-Gov. Dewdney the same day.

Despite Judge Rouleau's "intervention" with an alternative ordinance, his work on the select committee and his final moving of the bill, the credit for laying the foundation of the North West school system must go to Frank Oliver. The bill was predominantly his work, and before considering further the school ordinance and its implications, note may be made of Oliver's own opinion of Rouleau's

(53) J.N.W. Council, 1884, p. 46.

The "present Ordinance" was the "compromise bill", framed largely from Oliver's bill, but including certain of Rouleau's relatively minor amendments with respect to Separate Schools.

contribution:

He (Oliver) was somewhat surprised to find on examining Judge Rouleau's bill that the latter half was the printed bill which he had spent his time upon during the previous session cut out and pasted in, while the greater part of the remainder was the same bill copied word for word. Not wishing to imperil the passage of a school bill by opposing what he thought was the somewhat uncalled for conduct of Judge Rouleau, an understanding was arrived at between them that the names of both parties as introducers of the bill should be dropped, and that the bill introduced and amended by the speaker should be taken up by a special school committee of which Judge Rouleau was chairman.

He did claim, however, either blame or credit, as the case might be, for the passage of the school ordinance at all. (54)

The School Bill of 1884 was a comprehensive measure. It provided for the creation of a Board of Education for the North West, appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, and consisting of not more than twelve members, six of whom should be Protestants and six Roman Catholics. The Board of Education functioned in two sections, Protestant and Roman Catholic, each responsible for the control of its own schools. The Act authorized the erection of local school districts upon the petition of not fewer than four resident heads of families, and provided payment of a grant from the general revenue fund of the Territories where the average daily attendance of pupils was not less than ten. It

(54) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 17, 1885. A report of Oliver's statement at a meeting for the discussion of North West affairs.

placed the individual school district under an elected Board of Trustees, responsible for assessment, taxation for school purposes, and the general supervision of the local school. Provision was made for the erection of separate school districts, either Protestant or Roman Catholic, with "the same rights, powers, privileges, liabilities and method of government throughout as hereinbefore provided in the case of public school districts." The Act stated that "in no case shall a Catholic be compelled to pay taxes to a Protestant school or a Protestant to a Catholic school." The Board of Education exercised general control and supervision. It authorized the erection of school districts, established and enforced general regulations, formulated curricula, licensed teachers and appointed inspectors. (55)

In the months immediately following the enactment of the School Ordinance, sixty-five applications were received for erection of school districts. Before the Council met again in 1885, thirty-eight new districts were actually proclaimed, in addition to the twelve already receiving aid out of North West appropriations. However, the real establishment of the North West school system dates from 1885, or rather from March of 1886, for the necessary expenditures were not

(55) Ordinances of the North West Territories 1878-1887
1884 Ordinance Number 5 p. 95.

provided for until that date. (56)

The North West Council of 1885 enacted an important amendment to the School Ordinance of 1884. Dual control by Protestant and Roman Catholic sections of the Board of Education was continued, but the composition of the Board itself was drastically altered. The twelve-man Board of 1884 had proven unwieldy, and Ordinance Number 3 of 1885 provided that "the Lieutenant-Governor in Executive Council may appoint and constitute a Board of Education for the North West Territories composed of five members, two of whom shall be Roman Catholics and two Protestants, with the Lieutenant-Governor as Chairman." (57) The inclusion of the Lieutenant-Governor as Chairman of the new Board was a step in the direction of more direct control of Territorial education by the North West administration. (58)

The North West school system was further modified in due course, but Frank Oliver's School Ordinance of 1884 remained the foundation upon which it was built. Oliver was often enough criticized as being a destructive critic. The School Act of 1884 was a fine piece of pioneer legislation, and stands as a tribute to his abilities as a constructive planner.

(56) Black, *op. cit.*, pp. 562-3.

(57) Ordinances of the North West Territories 1878-1887
1885 Ordinance Number 3 p. 64.

(58) For further treatment of school question, see *infra* P. 218

In an editorial review of the session of '84 written upon his return to Edmonton, Oliver expressed satisfaction with the practical legislation enacted. He referred favorably to the ordinance authorizing the levying of municipal taxes and that dealing with civil justice, but continued, "Although the results of the legislative labors of the Council are by no means discreditable, as an executive body it is as deplorable a failure as ever. Nominally it possesses executive power, but actually, executive power seems to reside in the Lieutenant-Governor alone." He pointed to the stringent lack of funds and to the Governor's control of Dominion appropriations for the North West. Referring to the relative weight of appointed and elected members in the Council of 1884, he expressed deep disappointment that the elected members had not made a real test of their strength by forcing the issue as to where the final power in the Council lay. "If we are to have local government at all," he wrote, "let us by all means have self-government." (59)

In a further editorial headed "A Bill of Rights" he summed up his position as being that "on local questions the two main demands should be for local self-government and an equitable return of funds from the Federal Treasury with

(59) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 30, 1884. See also the Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 7, 1885.

which to carry on the different functions of that government on a scale proportionate to the value, importance and necessities of the country." (60)

A complete statement of policy headed "Our Platform" gave a clear summary of Oliver's stand on current North West affairs. Emphasizing that there were three classes of questions before the people of the North West: the purely local affairs of the Territories, contacts with the Government at Ottawa, and general Dominion policy affecting North Westers as Canadians, he stated his platform as follows:

The Territories have attained sufficient population to assume responsible local government, having all the powers of provincial governments.

Money grants to the Territories should be on the same scale as those made to the provinces.

The North West should control its lands. (61)

The North West should remain united, at least until such time as one or more of the different provisional districts shall have attained a sufficient population to warrant the expense, or make necessary, a separate local government.

Land, timber and other resources should be administered in the interests of actual settlement.

The C.P.R. Monopoly Clause is unjust and should be repealed.

The Hudson Bay outlet should be built with Federal assistance in return for North West lands granted to the C.P.R.

The prohibition law is a good one.

The North West is entitled to as full representation in the Federal Parliament as other parts of Canada.

The proper way to raise money is by direct taxation, and not by such a discriminatory method as the National Policy.

(60) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 25, 1884. "Sturgeon Meeting"

(61) Oliver later modified this view. See *infra* p. 335.

All provinces should have full provincial rights including control of natural resources.

The British connection should be continued as long as it is found as profitable and generally advantageous as at present, with a view to independence when that connection shall be dissolved; and annexation to the United States now or in the future is not desired or desirable in any sense. (62)

The "planks" of this platform may be fairly said to voice demands widely urged throughout the North West. Oliver was not the only proponent of reform, but he was certainly its most aggressive and volatile champion.

Oliver's two year term as Edmonton member would expire before the next meeting of the Council and sporadic electioneering began as early as December 2, 1884. Early in the new year meetings were held at St. Albert in which some suggestion of religious difficulties appeared in connection with schools. Father Leduc, priest of St. Albert, denied in a Bulletin statement that his words urging St. Albert to elect a Roman Catholic to the North West Council on account of "laws such as school laws" was to be construed as raising the religious issue. (63) Matt Macaulay struck a more personal note which was to characterize the campaign when he stated, "Some people called Mr. Oliver a reformer and some an independent, but for his part he thought he must be a

(62) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 1, 1884. "Our Platform"

(63) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 10, 1885.

socialist for he seemed to be opposed to everyone in authority." (64)

The Bulletin continued to feature, in a series of editorials and articles, the political views of its proprietor, including the claim that on an estimated total population of 100,000 the Territories were now entitled to more than eight elected representatives on the Council, and a firm declaration that, "The time has come for the people to demand, as they are demanding, the control of their own local affairs without let or hindrance from Ottawa or Ottawa appointees."⁶⁵

(65) Public meetings were held and not only political issues but personal animosities thoroughly aired. (66) Oliver reiterated his stand on prohibition and, claiming credit for the framing of the school ordinance, warmly defended its terms. (67) He assured his constituents that their demands of the previous summer, although he had been unable to make them acceptable to the Council in his resolution, were now being discussed at public meetings throughout the country in a way which would bring about their eventual implementation. (68)

(64) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 3, 1885. St. Albert meeting.

(65) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 10, 1885.

(66) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 24, 1885.

(67) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 17, 1885.

(68) Ibid

G.A. Simpson of the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Co. charged publicly that as a Council member Oliver had accomplished nothing, and that further, "He had been informed by a member of the Council that Mr. Oliver's conduct when attending its sessions was such that he was not treated with proper respect by the other members, and that his name attached to a bill or motion was sufficient to defeat it." Simpson also held that Oliver had been doing much harm through the Bulletin - inciting rebellion, discouraging immigration and so on. But the meeting at which these charges were made was apparently not too impressed by them, for, the Bulletin reported, when Simpson tried to incorporate them into a motion, "no person seconding the motion, Mr. Simpson took his seat amid derisive applause." (69) Simpson's charges were typical of criticism then being circulated to the effect that Oliver's uncompromising attitude, aggressive tactics and unrestrained invective were antagonizing Dominion Government and North West Council alike, and were prejudicing Edmonton's voice in North West affairs.

Dr. H.C. Wilson, in urging his claims for electoral support stated that, "Believing that the best interests of the North West cannot be served (at the present time) by factious opposition and senseless agitation against whatever

(69) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 17, 1885.

government may be in power, I shall always oppose any such course, but at the same time will always stand up for the rights of the settlers and endeavour to secure the privileges which this country is entitled to." (70)

The object of these direct and implied attacks willingly publicized his opponents' statements in the Bulletin, and replying to charges that he was always "agin the government" claimed that, "as a private individual he accorded all due deference to constituted authority as representing the will of the majority of the people, but as a popular representative in legislative or executive council he felt it his duty to exercise the powers entrusted to him under the constitution of the country without regard to any authority save that which placed him there." (71) He had no apologies to make in reply to the frequent complaints that he was always against those in authority and he stoutly maintained that,

He knew of only one way of accomplishing the ends he desired to gain. That was to fearlessly bring forward the desired measures as opportunity offered and advocate them vigorously and intelligently until success was attained. Other men might work better by other means, he could not.

To advocate measures because they were right, to bring forward arguments proving them to be right,

(70) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 21, 1885. Dr. Wilson was a Conservative.

(71) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 7, 1885.

to stand on the question of right was, he believed, the true way to obtain what was right, and no other way could be successful. (72)

As for his having voted against the rest of the Council, "He admitted having done so, and the meeting could depend that if returned, whenever he thought their interests lay on a certain side, he would vote on that side, though he voted alone or a hundred times." (73)

With Oliver's publication of "An Open Letter to the Electors" in the Bulletin of March 21, the election campaign was moving into full stride, when suddenly all interest in local politics was suspended in the crisis precipitated by the outbreak of the North West Rebellion.

The Rebellion was not primarily an "Indian war", but the fight for racial survival of the half-breeds and Métis who in the years following the Red River uprising had trekked westward into the valleys of the Qu'Appelle and Saskatchewan. Contributing to their grievances were the government's failure to concede scrip, insecurity of land tenure under tenuous squatters' rights, and the square system of survey. The white settlers of the Saskatchewan, themselves dissatisfied with political and economic conditions, gave an early lead in organizing half-breed and Métis unrest, (74)

(72) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 7, 1885.

(73) Ibid

(74) Stanley, op. cit., p. 261.

and the Métis claims were merged in that general struggle for North West rights of which Frank Oliver himself was a leading exponent.

During the summer and autumn of 1884 reform agitation, intensified by economic depression, was widespread throughout the North West. Commenting on a stormy meeting held in the town of Wolseley, the Calgary Nor' Wester called it, "A war-whoop which it was determined should be heard at Ottawa." (75) The Edmonton Bulletin added, "If that particular whoop is not heard, its echoes, or other similar whoops evidently will be," and claimed that all along the C.P.R. line in the Territories mass meetings were being held which unanimously and emphatically adopted the principle of North West rights. (76)

The spearhead of the white agitation in Saskatchewan was the Settlers' Union, which adopted at its Colleston School House meeting in February, 1884, those resolutions which were to form the basis of the "Bill of Rights" forwarded to Ottawa in December of the same year by Louis Kiel and the Union. (77) Including requests for more liberal treatment of the Indians, scrip and patent for the half-breeds,

(75) Stanley, op. cit., p. 304.

(76) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 6, 1884.

(77) Stanley, op. cit., p. 265.

responsible government, representation in the Dominion Parliament and cabinet, North West control of natural resources, modification of the homestead laws, vote by ballot, a Hudson Bay railway, and reductions in the tariff, the "Bill of Rights" bore a striking similarity in its demands to the long succession of Bulletin editorials and articles in which Oliver advocated the cause of western reform. (78)

When Louis Riel assumed the leadership of the Métis movement he had the co-operation, not only of many English half-breeds and white settlers, but of the Settlers' Union, which by its active support encouraged him to believe that the whole white population of the North Saskatchewan was behind him. (79) But his proclamation of the Provisional

(78) Stanley, op. cit., p. 306. deals with the Bill.

(79) W.H. Jackson, Secretary of the Settlers' Union, spared no effort to enlist the aid of Riel and make him acceptable to the white settlers. That not all leaders of public opinion in the North West were in agreement with this course is evident from the following:

Frank Oliver, in a letter to Jackson, Oct. 22, 1884, warned, "A word privately about Riel. He may be a man of the greatest influence and the most high minded patriotism but he is political dynamite, or may be a political boomerang. In endorsing Riel you will be held up as endorsing his whole course, and your enemies will have thus put in their hands the best possible weapon they can have against you. I don't say don't endorse him, you must judge for yourself as to that, but I warn you that it is a ticklish thing to do, and one that I would not from my slight acquaintance with the case, care about doing until he has done something to wipe out the blot that stands against him."

(Quoted from Stanley, op. cit., pp. 308-309.)

Government of the Saskatchewan and the drift toward extremes alienated the sympathies of the English half-breeds and white settlers who increasingly assumed an attitude of neutrality. (80) Perceiving the position of isolation into which his Provisional Government was being forced, Riel, already in constant touch with the Indians through his emissaries and runners, increased his efforts to secure their active support. Already aroused by their past grievances and the solicitations of Riel's agents, the native tribes were in a dangerous state of unrest and excitement. On the eve of Duck Lake, "from one end of the North West to the other, the possibility of an Indian rising was imminent."

(81) The storm centre of the Métis uprising lay in a triangle formed by Battleford, Prince Albert and Batoche, and in this area the Dominion Government had already taken at least some steps to meet the situation. (82) It was the isolated settlement that stood most in danger of Indian attack and Edmonton was in an extremely exposed position, especially should the Blackfoot rise in support of Riel.

In the Bulletin of March 28, 1885, the editor mentioned reports of trouble coming in from the Saskatchewan, but

(80) Stanley, op. cit., p. 317 and p. 320.

(81) Ibid p. 334.

(82) During 1884 the number of Police in the North Saskatchewan District was increased from 78 to 200.

refused to get excited about the whole affair. In the next issue, although news of the disaster at Duck Lake (83) had been received, Oliver assured his readers in a rather cryptic statement that, "There is no more present danger than there has been at any time during the past ten years." (84)

The Edmonton district, containing a fighting population of at least five hundred Indian men who might well receive outside help, lay wide open to attack with the only Police stationed at Fort Saskatchewan, eighteen miles distant. There was as yet no immediate cause for public alarm; but, Oliver warned, if the policy of the Indian Department was about to bear fruit, the settlement had better bestir itself for its own protection. (85) By April 11 the Bulletin was advising its readers that, "When the Indians around Edmonton will rise would appear now to be only a matter of days." (86) The Saskatchewan Country, under the mismanagement of the Indian Commissioner, "had been made a pile of dry wood. Many people have turned their attention from plowing to fixing their guns." It was generally felt that the Government would send troops, but this was scant consolation, for, "as the Indians are driven back they will

(83) Oliver's later comment on Duck Lake: "The later and fuller accounts of Duck Lake verify the old saying that an army of asses led by a lion are more than a match for an army of lions led by an ass."

Edmonton Bulletin, June 7, 1885.

(84) Edmonton Bulletin, April 4, 1885. (85) Ibid

(86) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11, 1885.

revenge themselves on the people here." (87)

Rumors of outrage and attack throughout the surrounding country threw the settlement into a state of near panic during the week of April 8. At a meeting in Kelley's saloon a Committee of Safety was formed, plans were formulated to get in touch with Griesbach's Police detachment at Fort Saskatchewan and a mounted courier was dispatched to Calgary with messages asking for arms and help. The Fort was strengthened and set in order. The two brass cannon were mounted, the north bastions cleared. Arms were tested and patrols established. Captain Griesbach assumed control of Fort Edmonton and the community settled down to a state of siege. (88) There is a story that during the days that followed, while most of Edmonton's inhabitants sought refuge in the Fort or under the protection of its walls, Oliver refused to join them but continued about his business and devoted his spare time to preparing his garden for the spring sowing.

Commenting on a speech in the Commons by opposition leader Blake attacking Macdonald's Indian policy, he wrote bitterly:

Of course it was unpatriotic and altogether too

(87) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11, 1885.
See also, Frank Oliver The Indian Drum

(88) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11, 1885.

bad for Mr. Blake to tell so much truth as to the rotten administration of North West affairs in one speech. But let the people who are visiting the graveyards at Prince Albert, who are cooped up in fear for their lives at Battleford, who are losing time and money in being humbugged at Edmonton, who are paying for the military necessary to restore that security to the North West that need never have failed, answer to the truth of the assertions Sir John once called heaven to witness that his hands were clean. Can he do so now? Will the stain of blood wash out? (89)

Around Fort Edmonton the days and nights were filled with rumors and alarms, but the St. Albert Métis did not join their brethren's cause, the local Indians confined themselves to isolated instances of bravado and rudeness interspersed with veiled threats of imminent action, (90) and the Blackfoot did not rise. Toward the end of April the approach of General Strange's column from Calgary reassured the settlers and cooled any military ardour among the Indians. "Since the Indians heard that troops are on the way," Oliver reported, "their desire to go on with their farming is marvellous." (91)

The Bulletin was by no means the only critic placing the blame for the Rebellion upon the shoulders of the Dominion Government and its Indian Department, and it reported with

(89) Edmonton Bulletin, April 18, 1885.

(90) Edmonton Bulletin, April 25, 1885. A rather amusing account of Indian activities around Edmonton during the "crisis days".

(91) Ibid

evident satisfaction a resolution, which was not without a certain grim humor, passed at Wolseley, Assiniboia:

That it is the opinion of this meeting that it is now time for the government to take decisive action, and that their first shall be that orders be issued to hang Riel to the first tree when he is caught, but if there must be delay that it shall only be long enough to capture Dewdney and hang the two together.

The Bulletin added, "The candidature of Mr. Pearce, inspector of mines, etc., etc., for similar honors is hereby suggested." (92)

No opportunity was missed to castigate the Hon. Edgar Dewdney. Referring to a certain Alex Fisher, ferryman at Batoche, who, carried away by the prevailing excitement, had been signing himself "Lieutenant-Governor", Oliver quipped, "It is to be feared that Mr. Fisher's ambition to fill Lieut.-Gov. Dewdney's shoes will lead him to a still further elevation - by the neck. This is to be regretted, for if he makes as good a Lieutenant-Governor as he did a ferryman, he would be a huge improvement on the present incumbent." (93)

The Bulletin featured sharp criticisms of Edmonton's state of defence, and biting references to the loss of lives and property which would inevitably have ensued had the

(92) Edmonton Bulletin, April 25, 1885.

(93) Ibid

Blackfoot or the local Indians taken the war-path. "That such a state of affairs should have existed in a district with a military officer in command, nearly a month after the first alarm was given and specials sworn in, is a disgrace to the Canadian Government, and of a piece with the mismanagement which has led to the whole of these deplorable occurrences." (94)

During the early part of May there was still no assurance that General Middleton's campaign in Saskatchewan would bring victory, and it was feared that the Rebellion might well drag on through the summer. Despite the arrival of General Strange's troops in Edmonton, there was little confidence that the danger was past. While Oliver blamed the Government for the rising, he was far from advocating a policy of pampering the Indians:

Let it be thoroughly understood that there is only one way of settling this Indian question properly. It may be true that the method of administering Indian affairs has been the cause of the outbreak, but it is also true that once the Indians have risen no amount of petting or promises will keep them within bounds again. . . . until they are shown forcibly and completely that they are not masters of the situation , there is no possibility of white people living in the country in that peace formerly enjoyed Cost what it may, it is cheaper to crush the rising than to deal with it in any other way, and the more forcibly and completely it is crushed the less it will cost and the less injurious will be its effects. (95)

(94) Edmonton Bulletin, April 25, 1885.

(95) Edmonton Bulletin, May 15, 1885.

So far as the Indians were concerned he summed up the situation by saying, "Too many white people have been butchered by the devils already, and from this time forward every effort should be made to meet the demand for dead Indians by a reasonable supply. We want peace." (96)

Oliver had little if anything to say in the Bulletin regarding the Métis rising as such, but it is evident that he was disillusioned and disgusted by the movement's drift to extremes under the guidance of Riel. The events of the past two months had completely destroyed any vestiges of respect which he may have had for Riel or his leadership. Upon receiving news of Riel's capture he wrote:

The idol has proven to be clay, and a poor quality clay at that. As a diplomat, as a general, as a man of courage, he has proven himself a complete fraud. Instead of being a hero he is a nobody, whom moderate oratorical ability and previous associations, assisted by circumstances in the shape of incompetent or corrupt government officials and administrators placed at the head of a movement which could only result in disaster to those engaged in it. (97)

"Riel should be hanged," he advised, especially for inciting the Indians and (allegedly) soliciting Fenian aid. ". . . the sooner he is quietly choked, either as a scoundrel or a fool, the better it will be for all classes of his fellow citizens." (98)

(96) Edmonton Bulletin, May 23, 1885.

(97) Ibid

(98) Edmonton Bulletin, June 20, 1885.

Although Oliver had a measure of praise for Middleton's "brute force and persistence", ". . . the kind that wins, and when it does win, wins completely," (99) little else in the conduct of the campaign or in the aftermath of the Rebellion evoked his commendation. He criticized Col. Oui-met's refusal to authorize the Edmonton Home Guards and let them have government guns, (100) he ridiculed the "undue leniency" with which the authorities treated some of Poundmaker's men, (101) and he flayed the Government for its "parsimonious policy" in dealing with the North West. This latter charge referred to the alleged reduction in pay of the N.W.M.P. which thinned their numbers just when the Government should have been building the force up. (102) Certain Canadian politicians, the Bulletin stormed, "have been transferred from a peanut stand to a wholesale establishment and are not equal to the duties imposed." (103)

The charge most calculated to raise western ire was that

(99) Edmonton Bulletin, June 7, 1885.

(100) Edmonton Bulletin, May 30, 1885.

(101) Edmonton Bulletin, June 20, 1885.

With reference to the Frog Lake massacre Oliver wrote in the Bulletin of June 7, 1885, "In the case of the Bands under Big Bear, . . . the Bands should be utterly destroyed - neither man, woman, nor child left alive. Humanity and justice -not revenge-demand this."

(102) Edmonton Bulletin, June 27, 1885.

(103) Ibid

which accused the people of the North West indiscriminately of having incited or participated in the actual Rebellion. It is true that numerous "inflammatory" articles had appeared in certain sections of the North West press, and that numerous resolutions of like nature had been passed at North West meetings. But apparently those critics of the Government who instigated or approved of these press articles and resolutions neither intended them nor expected them to issue in actual violence, at least not in the particular type of violence represented by the Métis uprising under the leadership of Riel. Having once and finally disowned the Saskatchewan insurgents and their leader, they absolved themselves from any responsibility for the Rebellion. Oliver himself, who was frequently enough branded as a "rebel" and an inciter of "rebels", hotly repudiated the charge of "white treason" in the North West. Articles embodying this charge, which appeared in the Winnipeg Times and the Toronto Mail, drew down his wrath. Under the banner "Who is Responsible?" he accused certain Eastern interests of ignorance, stupidity and self-interest, and reiterated his charge that the Dominion Government had always mismanaged North West affairs. "The government and its organs," he claimed, "are now making only too apparent the spirit in which the North West has all along been governed, and which promoted, instigated and

directly caused the late rebellion." (104) As to the western press or people being actual fomenters of the Rebellion, Ottawa, he warned, would do well not to interfere with the North West in its right of free speech. (105)

He derived considerable satisfaction from the "squabble in the East" over Riel's trial with its implicit question of whether Quebec or Ontario influence should be supreme in the North West. "In the fight for supremacy of which this is the beginning, the North West cannot fail to secure from one contestant or the other concessions such as it never would, had this little difference not occurred." (106) Riel's execution he considered fully justified, "but the prime cause of the Rebellion was governmental mismanagement. The blood shed during the Rebellion as well as that of Riel is upon the heads of our government at Ottawa, and at their hands God if not man will require it." (107)

By the middle of August the excitement engendered by the Rebellion had subsided and interest in the interrupted election campaign was resumed. Meanwhile the Electoral District of St. Albert had been erected, giving the Upper

(104) Edmonton Bulletin, July 18, 1885.

(105) Ibid See also the Bulletin, Oct. 17, 1885 - "Circumstances Alter Cases"

(106) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 17, 1885.

(107) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 21, 1885.

Saskatchewan Country two representatives on the North West Council, one from Edmonton and one from the Métis settlement. Edmonton's candidates, nominated on September 1, were Frank Oliver and Dr. H.C. Wilson, who had for some time been very prominent in community affairs. Wilson's platform did not differ materially from that of his rival, including an extension and definition of the powers of the North West Council, Territorial control of western lands and resources, cancellation of colonization society grants, removal of appointed members from the Council, and an improvement of trails. Dr. Wilson was a man of "moderate views and reasonable methods" who had already scored Oliver on numerous occasions for always being "agin the government". He "did not claim to be a temperance man, nor a very moral man," and he advocated the licensing of breweries in the North West. (108) Oliver expressed his approval of Wilson's platform with the exception of the breweries issue, and defended his own record as newspaperman and Councillor. He continued to urge that the best interests of the district could best be served in Council by "a man who neither asked nor expected favors, but who declared his mind and opinion without fear, favor or affection, according to his oath of office." (109) Wilson's Conservative leanings were well

(108) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 5, 1885.

(109) Ibid

known, and Oliver took pains to discredit the "personal influence" argument that a Government sympathizer could obtain concessions for his district at Regina more readily than could a member who opposed the Government. (110)

What appears to have begun as a quiet campaign apparently developed into a bitter contest, and September 15 provided Edmonton with an election spectacle which made the balloting of 1883 look tame.

The votes poured in thick and fast on both sides, the monotony of recording votes being varied by the frequent tender and cheerful acceptance of the qualification and bribery oaths in the most remarkable instances. Some men over sixty years of age, and who had lived for more than twenty years in the district, were compelled to swear that they were twenty-one and had been residents one year, while others who really saw the district for the first time last fall, swore with the greatest alacrity that they had resided in it for the twelve months immediately preceding the 7th August last. (111)

At noon the count was 58 to 50 for Wilson.

Returns from Belmont at the same time showed Oliver far ahead there, with most of the votes polled. The Wilson party saw that something must be done or the cause was lost. They rose to the occasion. Shortly after dinner, Messrs. A. McNicol, P. Brunette and T.H. Bradshaw, the two former ex-policemen and the latter still a member of the force, who have resided continuously at Fort Saskatchewan ever since their arrival in this part of the Territories, swore that they had resided in the Edmonton electoral district for the twelve months immediately preceding the 7th

(110) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 12, 1885.

(111) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 19, 1885.

August last and voted for Dr. Wilson.

Several other similar votes were run in shortly afterward, and as the supply seemed only limited by the demand the opposite side saw that while they were sure of victory if only men residing in the district voted they had no chance if St. Albert and Battleford voted against them (112) and gave up their efforts while the other side redoubled theirs. (113)

The final count revealed Dr. Wilson elected by a majority of nine votes. (114)

Presumably Oliver himself wrote the above quoted reports, and it is difficult at this distance of time to judge the fairness of the election. At any rate he regarded his defeat with a bitterness which may well have had some justification. Lashing out at his opponents in a fiery editorial headed "Vox Populi, Vox Dei (?)", he charged that the voting had terminated adversely to the cause of popular government and temperance. "To say that the narrow majority secured by the victors was secured by a combination of gerrymander, bribery, intimidation and whiskey is to put the case mildly, but the fact that it was secured remains." (115) Apart from those who cast bogus votes, he claimed, those "bribed into voting contrary to their convictions or intimidated into staying away, were not less to blame - if blame exists -

(112) St. Albert and Battleford were, of course, separate electoral districts. Apparent exaggeration to emphasize the distant votes allegedly called in.

(113) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 19, 1885.

(114) Can. Parl. Comp. 1887 p. 381. Wilson - 120; Oliver-111

(115) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 19, 1885.

for the defeat of their friend's cause." (116) "That such means should be used to secure an election is unfortunate; that they should be successful is a disgrace to the people of the district. . . . The support of the successful man came from the desire in Edmonton, in Regina and in Ottawa to perpetuate the one-man rule that now exists in the Territorial capital, and against which the former member worked so vigorously." (117)

Oliver reminded his former constituents that Wilson was bound by public promises to pursue the same course toward this "one-man government" that he himself had, but intimated that Wilson's support came from those who "believed he would not take the course which he had laid down for himself," and that "a majority of the more or less legally qualified voters of this district and vicinity are prepared to accept the rule of a local clique which is prepared to accept the rule of the Lieutenant-Governor, who in turn accepts - because he belongs to - the rule at Ottawa." (118) Recognizing that he had, naturally, been opposed by the "saloon interest", he maintained that the "farmer-barley-beer" question had not really influenced a single vote. "All parties thoroughly understood that the beer argument was only used as a catch -

(116) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 19, 1885.

(117) Ibid

(118) Ibid

the economic-farmer-barley argument was too thin to influence anyone, however simple." (119)

He had been asked, he stated, why in view of his open charges of corruption he did not contest the election. His answer was pointed enough:

If the impartial jury of public opinion so nearly renders a verdict against the people, what can be expected of a court in which government influence is paramount? Time was when judges were supposed not to interfere in political contests, but this contest has shown the contrary, and a doubt is thereby thrown on the impartiality of the possible election court. (120)

In evident disgust he concluded his election editorial with this bit of philosophy: "Politics are to some extent a game of chance, and in a case like the present, when the dice are loaded or the cards stacked, unless the game can certainly be broken, the sooner and more quietly honest men withdraw from it the better for themselves." (121)

(119) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 19, 1885.

(120) Ibid

(121) Ibid

Chapter 5 Continued Interest in Political Affairs

Frank Oliver, after two years on the North West Council, was not happy in his enforced role of private citizen. However, he possessed one advantage not held by every aspirant to public office defeated at the polls. He had a newspaper and a vitriolic pen. He also had the continued adherence, despite the results of the election, of a good number of local citizens who were far from satisfied with "sweet reasonableness" as a means of urging reform. The Bulletin had grown in stature throughout the Territories as the leading champion of North West rights. Its editor, temporarily out of office, but certainly not out of "public life", continued with unabated zeal to pursue his mission as gadfly of the administration.

The North West Council which assembled in Regina in November of 1885 included thirteen elected members of whom only four had served during the previous session. Not only was the change in composition evident, but the change in temper as well. Dewdney's vague and high-sounding opening speech, (1) in which the recent Rebellion was quickly glossed over, provoked a long and bitter debate in the Council. The Reply

(1) J.N.W. Council, 1885, p. 6.

as finally passed (2) and accepted by the Lieutenant-Governor (3) amounted practically to a vote of non-confidence in the Dominion's Territorial administration.

Oliver hailed the vote on the Reply as the beginning of a new era in North West politics, declaring it, "the first faint declaration of independence of the absolute control hitherto exercised by federal authorities and their representatives" With great satisfaction he noted that His Honor "swallowed this dish of crow which they had placed before him . . . at the same time trying to make himself and them believe that it was just such an address as he above all things was most enamoured of." (4) The Bulletin was less enthusiastic regarding the Council's action on schools. Oliver warned that the proposed Board of Education would have too much power to dictate school organization and that, "every remove that is made of the school districts from the immediate supervision of the Council is a remove from the assistance of the Council in financing." (5)

The Council, in fighting mood, passed a condemnation of

(2) J.N.W. Council, 1885, p. 6.

All the appointed and two elected members voted for a Reply echoing Dewdney's speech. Dr. Wilson of Edmonton was among those supporting the critical, and accepted, Reply.

(3) Ibid p. 50.

(4) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 26, 1885.

(5) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 19, 1885.

government policy on C.P.R. lands, claimed "still greater rights of representation which we feel we are entitled to but have not yet received," urged a request for Federal representatives, and framed a memorial of 27 grievances in which specific demands were made for local self-government, an elected legislative assembly, and in effect for a responsible cabinet system of government. (6) All this, of course, received the heartiest approval of the Bulletin.

Early in 1886 rumors were current that Dewdney might retire, and speculation was rife as to a probable successor. "There are," said Oliver, "many hungry souls waiting for the place at the public trough which he must soon vacate" (7) Referring to one candidate whose name had been mentioned, he continued, "What dirty work Judge Brooks has done or is considered capable of doing that would qualify him to worthily fill the hon. Edgar's shoes has not been divulged . . ." (8) He discounted Joseph Royal (9) as having "too long a record of self-interest", and named as his candidate for the office of Lieutenant-Governor and Indian Commissioner, Col. James F. Macleod, whose knowledge

(6) Wilson served on the delegation which presented this memorial in Ottawa.

(7) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 29, 1886.

(8) *Ibid*

(9) Royal did become Dewdney's successor in 1888.

of the West and long record of public service best qualified him for the position. (10) As for Dewdney, "His appointment was a calamity, his administration a crime, its results disaster and his retirement his most acceptable act." (11) The "most acceptable act", however, did not materialize, and Oliver was to find that his political arch-enemy was not to be disposed of so easily. (12)

The Council of 1886, although reiterating its previous claims and framing its annual memorial, was more pacific in its Reply. This elicited from the Bulletin the comment that, "While the Council has shown a swallowing capacity that a boa constrictor might envy, its ability to swallow is more than equalled by its docility in the act." (13) While praising the Council for its stand on representative government, Oliver condemned it for not pressing to a conclusion the demands taken to Ottawa by the delegates the previous February.

Actually, the Councils of 1885 and 1886 faced an extraordinarily heavy program of legislation involving numerous problems arising from the Rebellion: Rebellion claims, political prisoners, pensions and communications. Many

(10) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 29, 1886. Despite political differences Oliver had great respect for Macleod.

(11) Edmonton Bulletin, May 8, 1886.

(12) Dewdney did not retire until July, 1888. Soon afterwards, much to Oliver's disgust, he was appointed Minister of the Interior.

(13) Edmonton Bulletin, May 8, 1886.

weeks were spent on the organization of the North West school system, and dozens of ordinances were passed contributing to effective administration. This work must not be lost sight of in the Council's struggle to secure added powers and greater freedom from Dominion supervision. In anticipation of an act re-constituting the Territorial government, a Dominion order-in-council prolonged the life of the Council for one year - that is, until 1888.

In 1886, with the creation of four federal constituencies - Alberta, Saskatchewan, West Assiniboia and East Assiniboia - the Territories were granted representation in the House of Commons. Why Frank Oliver did not seize upon this opportunity to enter the field of Dominion politics may best be explained by an examination of the western federal election of 1887.

As early as November, 1886, the Bulletin, in a scathing criticism of federal "partyism" in Manitoba, was demanding that the electors "choose men who, no matter what their political preferences, may be depended upon to set country before party or private interest," (14) and preliminary electioneering was already under way for the first North West federal election. (15)

(14) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 20, 1886.

(15) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 27, 1886. Public meeting in Saskatchewan City (Fort Saskatchewan) in the interests of Strange's candidature.

Party lines were none too clearly drawn in the West, and formal federal party organization was almost completely lacking. Out of the organizational confusion of three months, with its conventions, meetings, moves and counter-moves, and the alignment of the press, there finally emerged three federal candidates: D.W. Davis, Conservative, Calgary; J.D. Lafferty, Liberal, Calgary; and Richard Hardisty, Independent, Edmonton.

D.W. Davis, manager of I.G. Baker & Co., was nominated by a "Liberal-Conservative" convention held in Calgary during the last week in January, 1887. This convention had been urged by the Calgary Herald, the Lethbridge News, and the Macleod Gazette to choose a straight party candidate. The convention opened with a resolution declaring full support of Sir John A. Macdonald and his Conservative government and of their North West policies. The first plank of Davis's platform was a reiteration of this declaration. (16) Later, at an Edmonton meeting, J.B. Costigan of Calgary, "Charged that it was owing to treachery on the part of Messrs. A. Taylor, telegrapher, and A.D. Osborne, postmaster, to whom communications on the subject were addressed that party lines were drawn in the contest, as conservatives

(16) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 12, 1887. Open letter of D.W. Davis and copy of the convention resolution.

of the South had been willing to unite with the liberals and elect Mr. Oliver as an independent by acclamation." (17) ("The parties admitted the receipt of the communications but denied that they had suppressed them.") (18)

Oliver's reaction to the Calgary convention was immediate and extreme. He saw in its workings the hand of the Hon. Edgar Dewdney, and accused "hizzoner" of having manipulated a convention, "which by its unanimous resolution has absolved itself from all responsibility in advocating the interests of the district or people for whom it presumes to speak; which specifically gives up both for the present and the future all claim to administration or legislation for the benefit of the constituency, except such as the great leader of the party may be graciously pleased to allow in the party interests." (19) As for D.W. Davis, whom the Bulletin editorially damned as "a Simon-pure, trade mark blown on the bottle" Conservative, (20) ". . . to be a member in good standing of either political party is to give up all opinions, no matter how much they may be the result of honest conviction, to the control of the machine."

(21) The opportunity was not missed of calling attention

(17) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 5, 1887. Election meeting.

(18) Ibid

(19) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 12, 1887.

(20) Ibid

(21) Ibid

to Davis's connections with I.G. Baker & Co. (22)

Dr. J.D. Lafferty was nominated in Calgary by a Liberal Association convention which discussed Oliver as a potential candidate. A section of the convention proposed that Oliver be supported as an independent. To this Lafferty and his adherents declined to agree. The convention then telegraphed Oliver that the Association would support him as a Liberal candidate. Oliver refused the offer, and Lafferty received the nomination. (23) Lafferty, claiming to be an "Independent-Liberal", stated that he did not forfeit his right to support measures in the interests of the North West, and that he would urge those interests at all times and on all occasions irrespective of party lines or the origins of such measures. (24)

In view of Oliver's subsequent role as "Independent-Liberal" in the Dominion House, his opinion of Lafferty's position is interesting. He doubted the effectiveness of being a Liberal and an independent at the same time, and was not at all certain that the position was even tenable.

(25) His criticisms of Lafferty were mild, however, as

- (22) This proved to be a two-edged sword in view of Hardisty's connections with the Hudson's Bay Company.
- (23) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 5, 1887. Lafferty's own explanation of his nomination as it appears in a report of an election meeting.
- (24) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 26, 1887.
- (25) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 5, 1887.

compared with the torrential abuse he heaped upon Davis, that "wheel in the party machine". (26)

The exigencies of "party" had proven too strong to secure Oliver a nomination as independent in the South. He might still have secured such a nomination in Edmonton, but with Davis and Lafferty in the field, and with a strong Conservative faction to contend with on his own home grounds, his chances of election would have been slight. He therefore declined nomination and gave his support to Richard Hardisty, local Hudson's Bay Co. factor, as Edmonton's independent candidate. In a long open letter accepting his nomination Hardisty outlined an elaborate platform, denied being "a Hudson's Bay man", and concluded, "I can best serve you by eschewing party lines and by being before all else a 'North West first' man. . . . I offer myself simply as Richard Hardisty, and as being one of the oldest settlers in the North West." (27) As an independent, the Bulletin claimed, Hardisty was acceptable to both Macdonald and the Liberal opposition because neither was certain of electing a party man. (28) Oliver approved Hardisty's platform, which contained some reference to constitutional reform couched in very general terms and a list of specific North West

(26) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 12, 1887.

(27) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 22, 1887.

(28) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 12, 1887.

grievances. "It asserts," the Bulletin stated, "as plainly as words can do that Mr. Hardisty has chosen to take the popular side in the contest being waged by the North West for the next few years to secure its emancipation from monopoly and mis-government." (29) Hardisty was a widely known and highly respected old timer. He was no politician, and it was upon their candidate as "a popular man advocating popular measures" (30) that his adherents pinned their hopes.

Sectionalism was evident in the campaign and became aggravated as electioneering proceeded. Both Davis and Lafferty, certain, apparently, of their hold on the South and considering the North to be the vulnerable front, invaded Edmonton with their cohorts in the weeks preceding the election and their presence added immeasurably to the local furor. The Conservative victory in the general elections held February 22 (31) strengthened Davis in the old argument that a government supporter could get more out of Ottawa than could an independent or adherent of the opposition. At the election meetings Oliver represented Hardisty who refused to do battle with the "Calgary forces" on grounds of inexperience. To recurrent charges that Hardisty

(29) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 29, 1887.

(30) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 22, 1887.

(31) The Dominion general elections were held on Feb. 22; the North West elections for Federal representatives not until March 15.

was a Hudson's Bay man with Conservative leanings, Oliver replied that his candidate's connection with the Hudson's Bay Co. was not inimical to the best interests of the country, and that anyway Hardisty was pledged as an independent.

(32)

At a tumultuous joint meeting held at St. Albert on March 2, Davis, Lafferty and Oliver exchanged compliments until two o'clock in the morning. (33) At X. St. Jeans, a "Lafferty meeting", Oliver defended Hardisty long and vigorously, and D.W. Davis, goaded by repeated insinuations regarding his connection with I.G. Baker & Co., declared his independence from "Company control" and hotly informed his audience that he "had given his firm to understand that if they did not like it (his candidature), as soon as they made up their minds to do without him, he would try to get along without them." (34)

Davis never failed to reiterate his loyalty to Macdonald's government, nor Lafferty to assay justification of his riding two horses at once. Hardisty, shrinking from the rough and tumble of the campaign, stood four-square as an independent. With each of the candidates trying, in a measure, to be "all things to all men", their platforms as

(32) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 5, 1887. Election Supplement.

(33) Ibid

(34) Ibid

appearing weekly in the Bulletin revealed very few material differences. Practical programs predominated. Oliver was not altogether happy in the position into which circumstances had forced him, but as he himself had remarked but a few months earlier, politics is to some extent a game of chance. Edmonton's candidate WAS a Conservative, to whatever extent he was anything "politically", but Oliver rested his support squarely on Hardisty's pledge as "independent", and did not consider that in so doing he was compromising his own political independence.

Balloting was still open (35) and the election of March 15 was followed by the customary suggestion of irregularities. Edmonton was not in contact with Calgary on election day because the telegraph line was found to be "out of order". Charges that the line had been tampered with were raised but not pressed. (36) Results from Calgary were not known until the following day. Davis was elected, mainly on the support of the South; Hardisty scored heavily in the North, and Lafferty fell between the two, trailing the field by a wide margin. (37) To complete Frank Oliver's cup of

(35) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 15, 1887. In reply to objections made to the open vote, Oliver at this time defended it as giving less opportunity for corruption. "A man who is afraid to cast his vote openly," he said, "is not equal to his privileges."

(36) Edmonton Bulletin, March 19, 1887.

(37) Ibid
Can. Parl. Comp. 1887 p. 177. Davis 1037
 Hardisty 783
 Lafferty 235

bitterness, the Conservatives made a clean sweep of the four Territorial constituencies. (38)

The Bulletin saw in the result another victory for the Conservative "machine", and found what consolation it could in the fact that Edmonton, at least, had expressed opposition to the party in power at Ottawa. (39) Oliver considered Lafferty's candidature a mistake as confusing the issue and splitting the votes. The Liberal organization, he charged, simply was not strong enough to elect its candidates in the West because it lacked a strong alternative North West policy with which to confront the Conservatives. Territorial sectionalism and selfishness, he felt, must share the blame for the Conservative triumph. (40)

Following the general election of 1887 Edward Blake (41) resigned the leadership of the Liberal party and Wilfred Laurier was chosen to succeed him. Oliver's opinion of his

(38) Can. Parl. Comp. 1887 p. 177 ff.

Assiniboia East	- W.D. Perley	Cons.
Assiniboia West	- N.F. Davin	Cons.
Saskatchewan	- D.H. Macdowall	Cons.
Alberta	- D.W. Davis	Cons.

(39) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 19, 1887. "After the Battle"

(40) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 26, 1887.

(41) Edmonton Bulletin, June 18, 1887. Editorially of Blake: "That his influence for good upon Canadian public life has been greater than that of any man of his day must be universally conceded and in retiring from it he can truthfully say, 'These hands are clean.'"

future chief was favorable but qualified. Laurier, he admitted, was a great orator, a speaker of "rare ability", and would always be "an honor and a strength to the cause he advocated." (42) However, he was not satisfied that Laurier's health could stand the strain of leadership, nor was he pleased with the new leader's "extreme" stand regarding Riel. (43) Recalling the great George Brown he wrote:

An able orator, a splendid writer, strong in body and determined in mind, inspiring full confidence in his honesty of purpose, he swayed the mind of Canada for good as no man ever did before or perhaps will again. . . . This is the measure of a reform leader that is still in the public mind and there is little hope that Mr. Laurier with his one or even two talents will be able to fill it. (44)

Territorial representation in the House of Commons focussed western attention on the Dominion session of 1887. The Bulletin, while praising N.F. Davin's sponsorship of a bill to establish responsible government in the Territories, (45) found little else to commend in the work of the North West members. Accusing them of ignoring their election promises, and singling out Alberta's representative particularly for attack, Oliver commented, "Of the whole platform

(42) Edmonton Bulletin, July 9, 1887.

(43) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 7, 1888.

(44) Edmonton Bulletin, July 9, 1887. George Brown's influence on Oliver has already been noted.

(45) Edmonton Bulletin, May 7, 1887.

but one plank remained after Mr. Davis and his three partners struck Ottawa - the support of Sir John. Why the numerous measures for the benefit of the people, spoken of so strongly and so frequently during the contest were so completely and unanimously ignored in Ottawa by our members and by everyone else, seems to require explanation at their hands." (46) He intimated that the western representatives had done nothing in righting North West wrongs, in fact upon occasion had voted with the government on policies inimical to the North West. In reply to W.D. Perley (Assiniboia East) who had allegedly explained that the North West members could really do nothing in Parliament, but must try to work through their personal influence on cabinet ministers, he denounced the explanation as puerile and maintained, "They are not there to bargain their votes for favors for their constituents, but to bring North West rights before the House of Commons." (47)

In broader fields than actual "politics" the Bulletin revealed an increasing interest in the national scene. The early 'eighties marked the beginning of an extended depression. A long decline in farm prices set in, accompanied by

(46) Edmonton Bulletin, July 16, 1887.

(47) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 10, 1887.

a general falling off in foreign trade and a decline in manufacturing. The apparent failure of the National Policy to stem the depression encouraged the advocates of commercial union with the United States, and the reciprocity issue came again to the fore in Canadian affairs. While a bitter critic of the National Policy, Oliver feared the implications of commercial union. Commenting on the reciprocity debates in the Commons he wrote, ". . . it remains for the Liberal party to declare exactly what their trade policy is and how they propose to secure its adoption. It is to be hoped that they will give up whining for trade favors from the United States and declare straight for tariff for revenue only, which means free trade with the world." (48) With reference to the proposed Fisheries Treaty of 1888 (49) he claimed that the Treaty implied the surrender of Canadian rights, and that it was rejected by the United States Senate only because it was not unconditional surrender. (50) ". . . the closer Canada is drawn into trade relations with the States the better that country is enabled to compel political concessions by threatening Canada's commercial prosperity through legislative or executive interference

(48) Edmonton Bulletin, April 14, 1888.

(49) The Chamberlain-Bayard Treaty. Rejected by the United States Senate.

(50) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 1, 1888.

with those trade relations. If it (Canadian nationality) is to be preserved, it must be in the face of the open jealousy and opposition of the United States." (51)

He was firmly against commercial union, believing that the United States would take every possible advantage of Canada and use its superior economic power to Canada's disadvantage. He was very critical, therefore, of Laurier's appeal that Canada should alter its policy of "unfriendliness" with the United States with a view to inducing unrestricted reciprocity. Such a course, he urged, could not be approved on logical grounds. "Laurier is asking the liberals of Canada to place their country in such a condition of commercial connection with the United States as would amount to commercial bondage," with, of course, its concomitant lever of political bondage. (52) It will be interesting as well as informative to recall these statements in dealing with the Dominion elections of 1911 when, as Laurier's Minister of the Interior, Oliver backed to the hilt his chief's stand on the reciprocity issue.

The West had not opened up as anticipated with the building of the C.P.R. Yet several factors - the railway itself,

(51) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 8, 1888.

(52) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 15, 1888.

the repeated solicitations of the North West Council, even the North West Rebellion - served to bring the West and its problems increasingly to the attention of Ottawa. The granting of western Federal representatives has been considered, but following the general elections of 1887 significant developments occurred also in the Territorial government.

At the session in Regina in 1887, Lieut.-Gov. Dewdney informed the Council that Ottawa had requested him to confer with the Council members regarding changes in the constitution of the North West Territories. (53) The Council was happy to oblige with a memorial reiterating its demands of 1886, and requesting a system of responsible government with a cabinet, with complete control of finances including the expenditure of the Dominion grants, and with the powers of the Lieutenant-Governor greatly curtailed.

Early in 1888 the Dominion Parliament passed an Act respecting the North West Territories (54) which inaugurated the third stage in Territorial constitutional development. The North West Council was abolished, and a Legislative Assembly of 25 members was created of whom 22 were to be elected and 3 were to be legal experts appointed from the

(53) J.N.W. Council, 1887, pp. 6 - 10. The Speech from the Throne.

(54) The North West Territories Act of 1888. Statutes of Canada, 51 Vict, c 19 (1888)

North West judiciary. These legal experts were to participate in the Assembly's deliberations but were to have no vote. The Assembly, presided over by a speaker, was to have powers analogous to those of provincial legislatures, but inferior inasmuch as they were to be exercised under orders-in-council issued by the Governor-General. The Act also created an Advisory Council consisting of four members of the Assembly, who with the Lieutenant-Governor constituted an Executive Committee in matters of finance. This Advisory Council was definitely not intended to be a cabinet.

Sir John Macdonald himself, speaking on the section of the Act creating the Advisory Council, stated, "The true theory, I think, of the Territorial system, so long as it continues, is that government proceeds from here." (55) All the Territorial members in the House except N.F. Davin spoke against responsible government for the North West. (56) Certainly the Dominion Government did not favor it. In the Territories some of the newspapers were lukewarm; some were actively opposed, mainly on grounds of expense; while a few, like the Macleod Gazette and the Edmonton Bulletin, were staunch advocates. (57) The average North Wester was

(55) Oliver, E.H. Contest between Lieutenant-Governor Royal and the Legislative Assembly of the North West Territories 1888-1893
 Royal Society of Canada - Proceedings and Transactions 3rd Series Vol. XVII 1923 p. 87
 Hereafter referred to as E.H. Oliver in Royal Soc. Trans.

(56) Ibid p. 87.

(57) Ibid p. 87.

not a political theorist, and was perhaps interested mainly in getting the best practical administration at the least cost whether it came from the Dominion Government or the Territorial Assembly. The earnest fighters for responsible government were to be the members of the Assembly itself, especially those who had served on the old North West Council, and who wished now to increase the power and prestige of the new Legislative Assembly.

Frank Oliver, at first unfavorable to the proposed North West Act as inadequate, (58) later seized on the provision to create an Advisory Council and interpreted it in such a way as to furnish the key to the whole impending struggle between Lieut.-Gov. Royal and the new Legislative Assembly:

This latter provision (for the creation of the Advisory Council) is of the highest importance, and alters the whole nature of the bill. The Committee (the Advisory Council) although nominally advisory is really executive, and if it does not give responsible government in name, provides the means by which responsibility in government may be secured.

The Advisory Committee . . . places the control of Territorial finances, which is the key to the situation, in the hands of the people's representatives, and all that remains for them is to push that control to its proper conclusion. (59)

Oliver's interpretation thus differed very widely from Sir John's intent, and "all that remains" proved to be a four-year battle during which the Assembly, split into

(58) Edmonton Bulletin, May 19, 1888.

(59) Edmonton Bulletin, June 2, 1888.

factions, and in an atmosphere electric with personal and political animosity, engaged most of its time and energy in "pushing that control to its proper conclusion".

With the Territorial elections under the new Act set for June 30, 1888, Oliver declared the issue to be responsible government versus Dominion control, and announced his candidature for a seat in the North West Legislative Assembly.

(60) His platform, he stated, was well known; and he confined his "Open Letter to the Electors" largely to an appeal on his past record:

If I have been faithful to every trust, if I have always worked to advance the public interest, if I have never dealt unfairly between section and section, between race and race, between creed and creed, or between man and man, and if my endeavours have reached a fair measure of success, I ask for the support of every voter who desires to be represented honestly, earnestly, impartially and successfully, for his vote and influence to secure my election. (61)

Three other candidates entered the race: Dr. H.C. Wilson, D. Maloney, and Samuel Cunningham, member of the North West Council for St. Albert since 1885. Open letters from each appeared in the Bulletin, and at the same time its editor made a strong plea for non-partisanship. Citing the

(60) Edmonton Bulletin, June 9, 1888.

With the disappearance of the North West Council, the Electoral District of St. Albert was merged in the Electoral District of Edmonton, which with greatly extended boundaries was entitled to two seats. The new Electoral District of Edmonton included Lac St. Anne, Peace Hills (Wetaskiwin), Beaver Lake and Lac La Biche.

(61) Ibid

"deplorable mistakes" of Manitoba where party politics ran rampant, he stated, "It would be deplorable to have the North West Legislature divided upon Federal issues or party lines." (62)

With little time left for campaigning, at least one large public meeting was held at which all four candidates presented their views. Dr. Wilson affirmed his support of responsible government and offered his past record, including his work on the North West delegation to Ottawa. He claimed that the only real issue between himself and Oliver was the prohibition law. He still favored a liquor licensing law in the Territories. Cunningham, a half-breed, spoke in both Cree and English, simply reviewing his record, while Maloney levied general charges of inefficiency and corruption against the members of the old North West Council. Oliver spoke on responsible government, claiming that he had been the first to agitate the question in the North West. He also claimed to be the father of the movement in favor of giving the Territories the power to deal with local matters, and to be the originator of the school law. Against the old charge that he was a "kicker" he defended himself with his customary vigor.

The election, climaxing the short but very sharp campaign,

was bitterly contested. In those days of open voting each party tried to shape its election day strategy according to the hour to hour standing in the larger polls. Loose contacts were often maintained by runners, horsemen or even flying squadrons in "democrats". There was now a telephone line out to St. Albert, but oddly enough it was found to be down on the day of the election. Intimations of Federal "influence", and the usual charges of electoral abuses and "dirty work" were bandied about freely. The victors were Oliver and Wilson. (63) Oliver interpreted the result as a demand for responsible government and a desire for a change in the liquor law and its administration. (64)

No sooner were the elections over than Edmonton was thrown into a political furore by the impending appointment of Dewdney as Minister of the Interior. (65) Public meetings were held at which pro-Dewdney and anti-Dewdney speakers expressed themselves, frequently with more heat than light. (66) Oliver's opinion of Dewdney need hardly be

(63) Can. Parl. Comp., 1889, p. 397.

Wilson	395
Oliver	350
Cunningham	319
Maloney	150

(64) Edmonton Bulletin, July 7, 1888.

(65) Dewdney entered the cabinet following his election by acclamation in Assiniboia East, where he succeeded W.D. Perley who had resigned to enter the Senate.

(66) Edmonton Bulletin, July 28, 1888; Aug. 4, 1888.

repeated, but Wilson characterized the former Lieutenant-Governor as "a man of ability and honesty" While the local hubbub was at its height Dewdney duly entered the Dominion Cabinet as Minister of the Interior. In a final blast Oliver informed his readers that the government had good reason to make the appointment after the North West elections, but before the meeting of the new Assembly, and that, "Whoever Dewdney may represent in the Cabinet, he does NOT represent the people of the North West." (67)

Dewdney's successor as Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories was the Hon. Joseph Royal, whose appointment was confirmed in July of 1888. Oliver had already expressed himself very freely on Royal and his political activities in Manitoba, (68) and in the previous January had written:

(67) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 4, 1888.

(68) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 9, 1884. "A Royal Banquet" "To Mr. Royal and the clique with whom he worked, from the villainous Clarke to the slippery Norquay, both inclusive, Manitoba owes to a greater extent than to any other cause the despicable position which she occupies today, bound hand and foot under railway monopoly, and gagged by misrepresentations in both local and general parliaments."

Royal was a "high" Conservative and a Catholic.

In assessing Oliver's opinion, account must always be taken of political animosity and the virulence of frontier journalism. E.H. Oliver, op. cit. in Royal Soc. Trans. considers that Royal served his term very creditably.

The office of Lieutenant-Governor is chiefly honorary and one that can be properly filled by a man whose reputation is such that he does honor to the office as well as is honored by it. Mr. Royal is not such a man. He is simply a low politician. A man who has sufficient ability to keep him in political life but not sufficient to raise him in it; who must depend upon his rascality, not his ability, to secure him political advantages.

The North West has been disgraced for the past five years by such a Lieutenant-Governor; it does not want a similar dose for the next four. (69)

When Oliver took his seat in the North West Council in 1883 he found himself opposed to a Lieutenant-Governor whose public career he had bitterly criticized for several years. The situation was repeated upon his election to the Territorial Assembly.

(69) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 14, 1888.

Chapter 6 In the Interests of the North West 1883-1888

Frank Oliver's part in active politics was closely allied to a genuine interest in the North West and its people. Through the Bulletin he urged continuously not only reform of the Territorial Government, but of the whole system of North West administration.

With a declared policy of expressing an emphatic opinion on North West matters, the Bulletin claimed with considerable justification to be the champion of the North West settler, and was proud to be the uncompromising critic of Dominion policy in the Territories. In reply to the repeated charge that it was too radical, it called attention to actual maladministration, and claimed some credit for the "growing admission that the interests of the North West settlers and the Dominion government ought to be synonymous." (1) The Bulletin "will continue to offend 'the powers that be' when opinion differs. It believes the right is always the expedient." (2) Further, "That the Bulletin has done something to hold the settlement here by encouraging the people and upholding their rights and also - by disseminating a knowledge of the district and its people -

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 7, 1885. Introducing Vol. VII, Number 1.

(2) Ibid

something to draw the frontiers of civilization nearer, it makes bold to claim." (3)

Oliver considered most political corruption with all its varied ramifications to stem from "partyism", (4) and he interpreted the Conservative losses in the elections of 1887 as a sign that addiction to "party" was losing its hold in Canada. "The present party machines of Canada are not adapted to the work required of them, consequently they are either clogged or running empty, and cannot last much longer." (5) "Partyism", bad enough in federal politics, was, he believed, most harmful when carried over into Territorial affairs. Along with others who became prominent in the North West, he held that federal party ties had no legitimate place in Territorial government. (6)

His opinion of colonization companies was well known, and during several years he continued his spirited attacks on the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Co. The following editorial on the Company is a fair sample of his attitude toward the "colonization monopolies".

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 6, 1886.

(4) Lower, in Colony to Nation, uses the following expressions in characterizing nineteenth century "partyism": "The very pitch in Canada of pure partyism." "A blind partisanship." "A bitter pseudo-hate." "Having little more satisfactory spiritual sustenance, with no great cause before them and no native culture at their side, men lived in a tribal frenzy of excitement against the opposite party." p. 371.

(5) Edmonton Bulletin, July 10, 1887.

(6) The non-partisanship of Haultain and others will be referred to.

The Lion and the Lamb

The Company secured the land for the sole purpose of making money. Corporations have neither souls to be saved nor bodies to be kicked. Any one of a thousand reasons might induce the present company to sell out to another which might be as bad as this one may be good. The characters of the present members of the company, admitting them to be blameless, is no guarantee that the promises they have lately made will be carried out by their successors beyond the points to which they are compelled. The lion of the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Co. may be a very good hearted and mild mannered animal of its kind. But the kind is not good, and as in the case of other lions, the further it is off, the safer the lamb will be. When time and events prove that the company is a benefit to this district we will be prepared to admit it, but until then we are obliged to hold the opinion that the probabilities are decidedly against this being the case. When we see the lion and the lamb lie down together we expect to see the lion get up alone. (7)

At a public meeting featured by an acrimonious debate between Oliver and G.A. Simpson, agent of the Company, regarding the policies and intent of the enterprise, Oliver advised the local people to have nothing to do with it. (8)

At another public meeting in the summer of 1883, W.B. Scarth, managing director, and Senator Carvell, co-director, defended the Company's policy and record in the district and expressed their deep resentment of the attacks made on them in the Bulletin. Oliver replied that "he liked the men but did

(7) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1883.

(8) Edmonton Bulletin, July 7, 1883.

not like their business," and repeating his criticisms, expressed the hope that the government would annul the contract of a company that the country could get along nicely without. (9) He continued to be the bitter and voluble opponent of the Company until its "baneful presence and influence" (10) finally disappeared in the general closing out of colonization company contracts which occurred in the late 'eighties.

Oliver was especially concerned with the problems of the squatters, that is, of those who had settled the land in advance of the surveys or of the land grants. "The rights of the squatters will be upheld," he promised, "and the influence of this paper will be thrown against monopolies of all kinds - particularly those maintained by act of parliament." (11) The Bulletin defended the "speculative squatter" whom, it claimed, the government hated simply because he usually beat Ottawa to desirable lands which it had earmarked for its party heelers and their friends.

Following the survey in the Edmonton area, a commission was appointed to adjudicate upon squatters' rights. There was apparently great dissatisfaction when the adjudications were made known, and in the spring of 1885 a public meeting

(9) Edmonton Bulletin, July 21, 1883.

(10) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 4, 1886.

(11) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 3, 1883.

was called to frame a protest to Ottawa. A series of resolutions were drawn up including one moved by Oliver that "this meeting is assembled to assert the squatters' rights of the settlers of this district," and a committee headed by Oliver was appointed to continue the battle for fair adjustment of squatters' claims. (12)

Despite the free homestead policy and the building of the C.P.R., immigration during the 'eighties was relatively slight, giving way toward the end of the decade to increasing emigration to the United States. Resentful of the National Policy tariffs and roused by the Manitoba disallowance battle, a farmer convention at Winnipeg passed, on March 5, 1884, the famous "anti-immigration resolution" which declared, ". . . that in the opinion of this convention the burdens laid upon the people of Manitoba are so great that agricultural operations cannot be made to yield a fair profit; that immigration before the removal of these burdens will profit neither the province nor the immigrant, and that this province cannot advise immigrants to settle in the province until full redress from the grievances complained of by the convention has been made." (13) This exhibition of "frontier radicalism" provoked widespread

(12) Edmonton Bulletin, March 28, 1885.

(13) Edmonton Bulletin, April 12, 1884.

criticism in the East. The Bulletin rose to the defence of the farmers and blamed the Government and the C.P.R. for any adverse effects the resolution might have. Eastern interests, Oliver alleged, were now preparing to use it as an excuse for the failure of the immigration policy and were charging that "no more railways will come in, no more capital will be invested in the country on account of the passage of that resolution." (14) This was a poor cover-up for a situation directly blamable on the Government, the Bulletin said, and exhorted the farmers that "having put their hands to the plow they must not look back but must meet threats and opposition by defiance and determined action." (15)

The real reason for ineffective immigration, Oliver maintained, was to be found in fallacious government policy and inefficient administration. Regarding the North West as an area of exploitation, the government sought to make it pay the cost of the C.P.R., and through the National Policy to support the manufacturing interests of the East. Directly, the East levied tribute in the form of timber and mineral fees; in addition it used the West's undeveloped resources as a bribery fund to secure the support of colonization

(14) Edmonton Bulletin, April 26, 1884.

(15) Edmonton Bulletin, April 12, 1884.

companies and transportation interests. As a "dumping ground for political rubbish" the Territories were made to carry too many, and too inefficient, government officials.

(16)

The Hon. Thomas White, new Minister of the Interior, and one of the few Conservatives for whom the Bulletin had a good word, toured the North West in the autumn of 1885. Territorial communities took this occasion to urge their demands upon the government. The Bulletin, in an editorial headed "Our Wants", called White's attention to "the rights, requirements and desires" of the Edmonton district. In a formidable list mention was made of recognition of squatters' rights, abolition of dues on settlers' hay and wood, reduction in the price of pre-emptions with the privilege of second homesteading, supervision of colonization companies, the opportunity for local people to compete for government contracts, immediate issue of half-breed scrip, improvement of roads, assistance to Saskatchewan River navigation, improved telegraph service, representation in the House of Commons, and responsible government for the North West. (17)

Oliver was favorably impressed by White during the latter's visit to Edmonton, deriving particular satisfaction

(16) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 27, 1886.

(17) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 7, 1885. "Our Wants"

from the Minister's independent opinion on North West affairs. He even went so far as to hope that White's visit would have concrete results, but unfortunately the visitor's appreciation of North West needs did not overcome governmental inertia to the extent anticipated. (18)

In 1870 the claim of the half-breeds of Manitoba to share in the extinction of the Indian title was recognized by "ungranted lands, to the extent of one million four hundred thousand acres to be appropriated for the benefit of the families of the half-breed residents." (19) Four years later the original plan was modified by introducing the choice of scrip as an alternative to direct land grant. (20) Various other changes were made in due course, but "the history of the half-breed grant in Manitoba was one of ministerial incompetence, parliamentary indifference and administrative delay." (21)

Thousands of the half-breeds and Métis trekked into the Saskatchewan country following the Red River Rebellion, and

(18) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 14, 1885.

(19) Chester Martin Dominion Lands Policy p. 237.

(20) Ibid p. 238.

Stanley, op. cit., p. 244. The actual alternative to 160 acres of land was an issue of money scrip to the value of \$160 to every father or mother; also to children resident in Manitoba on July 15, 1870.

(21) Chester Martin Dominion Lands Policy p. 244.

from the early 'seventies the North West half-breeds were active in petitioning the government for scrip. (22) However, the claim of the half-breeds of the North West beyond the boundaries of Manitoba for a share in the extinction of the Indian title was not recognized until 1885. Government inertia and delay finally gave way to belated action in March, 1885, the eve of the North West Rebellion.

The Bulletin had for years been active in its demands for half-breed scrip, and reported with satisfaction the arrival of the scrip commission in Edmonton in the summer of 1885. (23) Oliver charged, however, that the commission did a hasty and bad job in the district. "The work was begun and closed with undue haste and was not completely nor satisfactorily concluded." (24)

Land or scrip privileges under the Manitoba Act included half-breed children (in Manitoba) born before July 15, 1870. When scrip was finally granted in the North West, this date of commutation was adhered to, which meant that North West half-breed children born after July 15, 1870, had no scrip rights. Not only the half-breeds but numerous white residents considered this settlement to be unjust, and a long

(22) Scrip figures in practically all lists of North West demands.

(23) Edmonton Bulletin, June 6, 1885.

(24) *Ibid*
See also, Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 5, 1885.

struggle set in to secure scrip for all half-breed children resident in the Territories in 1885. Oliver was a staunch champion of this claim, and editorials and articles asserting half-breed rights appeared frequently in the Bulletin.

(25)

Numerous half-breeds throughout the North West were classified as treaty Indians. Upon the concession of scrip in 1885, most of them applied for release from treaty in order to be eligible for scrip. Although the government was not enthusiastic, Oliver urged the justice of their claim. In addition, he declared, it would be a great step in a desirable direction, that of breaking up the tribal system which "is the curse of the Indian and the great bar to his civilization." (26)

In 1886 the Dominion Government was still "cleaning up" after the North West Rebellion, and the Bulletin brought it to task vigorously for its alleged policy of repudiation and cutting down of debts payable to North Westers from accounts arising out of military obligations. (27) Said the Bulletin, "It is the height of madness at this time, after having seen the direful effects that have been brought on the North West

(25) Edmonton Bulletin, July 24, 1886; May 9, 1891 and passim.

(26) Edmonton Bulletin, July 10, 1886.

(27) This refers to accounts payable to North West traders and settlers for services, food, horse feed for the cavalry, etc.

by the double dealing of the government, to resume so early that course in such exaggerated form." (28)

Under the banner "White Rebels", Oliver, in referring to the Regina trials, accused the Government of trying to pin the blame for the Rebellion on the "white rebels", and intimated that Ottawa was merely trying to direct Eastern prejudice against the North West in order to cover up its own mismanagement. (29) Editorially the Bulletin criticized the work of the Mounted Police detachment under Major A.H. Griesbach during the Rebellion panic days in Edmonton, (30) and supported the demand of the Edmonton Volunteers (31) for recognition and scrip. (32) The amnesty granted the rebels it denounced as a policy of weakness. (33)

In the early 'eighties contracts for N.W.M.P. supplies were let in Ottawa, and consequently no direct opportunity was afforded small business in the North West to share in them. This was a rank injustice, the Bulletin claimed, and

(28) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 13, 1886.

(29) Edmonton Bulletin, April 3, 1886.

(30) Edmonton Bulletin, May 1, 1886. The Bulletin carried a letter from Maj. Griesbach describing the work of his detachment during the Rebellion. Oliver headed the letter "Romance". Then under an editorial heading, "Facts", he refuted Griesbach's claim to credit.

(31) Enrolled March 30, 1885. Disbanded shortly afterwards.

(32) Edmonton Bulletin, May 8, 1886.

(33) Edmonton Bulletin, July 31, 1886.

"Ordinary business principles have been violated if not for the purpose at least with the result of throwing business that rightfully belongs to the North West into the hands of corporations of which two have their headquarters in St. Louis, U.S.A., and the third in London, England." (34)

Oliver was active in the movement to have the N.W.M.P. barracks moved from Fort Saskatchewan to Edmonton, (35) and in contradiction of the Police Commissioner's report to the Territorial Lieutenant-Governor, he alleged a deterioration in the force and a growth of lawlessness in the years following the Rebellion. The Bulletin was particularly outspoken about the robbery of the Edmonton mail stage near Humboldt, Saskatchewan, in the summer of 1886, and its editorial on the circumstances surrounding the trial of the alleged highwayman, one Garnett, was a fine piece of "free press" comment on the administration of justice. (36) The Bulletin frequently criticized, as open to abuse, the right of stipendiary magistrates to set the bounds of the judicial districts and to decide the frequency and time of sittings. (37)

(34) Edmonton Bulletin, May 24, 1884.

(35) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 27, 1887. Reporting a public meeting which reviewed past action and considered further steps.

(36) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 23, 1886. Garnett was brought to trial at Regina, which, Oliver charged, denied the defence sufficient opportunity to present defence witnesses. Garnett was found guilty and given 14 years.

(37) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 6, 1886.

Claims of deterioration and inefficiency in the Police Force appeared in the Bulletin throughout 1887. "The good old days are gone," mourned the editor, stating that the Indians were being pampered into insolence, the Police Commissioner was subject to increasing political interference, and the work of the Force was being made secondary to the problems of the Indian Department. At the bottom of this "mess", the Bulletin intimated, was none other than the Hon. Edgar Dewdney in his dual role of Lieutenant-Governor and Indian Commissioner, and "When the enforcement of justice by the police in the North West is made second to the exigencies of the Indian Department, or any other department, it becomes a mockery, a humbug and a farce and is a gross injustice to the law-abiding inhabitants of the Territories and to the tax-payers of Canada."*(38)

Oliver was the staunchest exponent of prohibition to serve on the North West Council, and after his defeat by Dr. Wilson in 1885 he continued his battle against liquor in the columns of the Bulletin. He believed that prohibition should be a provincial or Territorial rather than a federal matter, and suggested that the whole question should be submitted to a popular vote in the Territories. He expressed

(38) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 24, 1887.
See also the Bulletin issues of Nov. 12, 1887 and Nov. 16, 1889.

his faith that the common sense of the people would declare for prohibition, and that thereafter, strengthened by popular approval, it could be more adequately and justly enforced. (39) The Bulletin did not advocate control of the liquor traffic by either the North West Council or the succeeding Legislative Assembly. It held that prohibition should be kept out of the arena of North West politics, and consistently advocated a popular referendum. (40) In reply to those who maintained that prohibition had already proven a failure in the Territories, Oliver claimed that no honest attempt had ever been made on the part of the authorities to give the prohibitory law effect. (41) The Bulletin agitated the liquor question frequently during the spring and summer of 1888, in anticipation of its consideration by the first session of the new North West Assembly. (42)

During the 'eighties the Bulletin continued to feature numerous articles on the Hudson Bay route, and showed some concern lest the Bay outlet should fall into the hands of

(39) Edmonton Bulletin, June 11, 1887.
See 1886-1888 issues of the Bulletin for numerous expressions of opinion.

(40) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 31, 1888.

(41) Ibid

(42) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 4, 1888; Aug. 11, 1888.
Two papers supported the Bulletin as out and out prohibitionist: the Regina Journal and the Qu'Appelle Progress. Others were either neutral or for a license law. (Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 10, 1888, quoting various press opinions.)

the C.P.R. Oliver suggested that the line should be built under control of an independent British company or under provincial management. (43) The chief consideration would be that it give competition to the Canadian Pacific. (44) He was enthusiastic over a prematurely chartered Alberta and Athabasca line (45) and hailed with delight a rumour that the Grand Trunk and the American Northern Pacific might supply money for Manitoba's Red River line and continue it westward. (46)

The "monopoly clause" of the C.P.R. charter involved the Dominion Government and Manitoba in a protracted battle over provincial rights. When Premier Norquay of Manitoba granted charters to several local railways running to the international boundary, Macdonald's government promptly disallowed them. Matters came to a head in 1887 over the Red River Valley line south to the boundary, Manitoba insisting on its right to charter the road and denouncing the C.P.R. monopoly, and the C.P.R.'s Van Horne publicly branding the Valley line's promoters as annexationists. (47)

(43) Most of the line would lie outside Manitoba, but would be under the management of the Manitoba government.

(44) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 29, 1884; May 10, 1884; Nov. 8, 1884; Mar. 9, 1888; May 2, 1891.

(45) Edmonton Bulletin, June 25, 1887.

(46) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 6, 1887.

(47) Gibbon History of the Canadian Pacific p. 317.

Oliver was no friend of Norquay's government, (48) nor was he an "annexationist", but as the pronounced opponent of the C.P.R. in general and of the monopoly clause in particular he revealed his sympathy with Manitoba in the disallowance battle. (49) In 1884 a Manitoba delegation visited Ottawa where its demands for provincial rights were refused, mainly, Oliver charged, because the province had a legislature "prepared to a man to barter its independence to the C.P.R. for free passes and free whiskey" (50) "Let Scott and Sutherland, Ross and Royal, Norquay and Brown, and the whole list of hucksters and tricksters, suckers and puppets, knaves and fools, who have led the Manitoba people by the nose for the last ten years, receive short notice to quit . . ." (51) At the height of the Manitoba agitation for the Red River Valley line Sir George Stephen threatened to move the C.P.R. main shops from Winnipeg to Fort William unless the province moderated its attacks on the Canadian Pacific. (52) In an editorial

(48) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 23, 1884; Mar. 29, 1884 - "A Political Acrobat"; Jan. 1, 1887.

(49) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 14, 1887.

(50) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 1, 1884.

(51) Ibid Oliver was not at all convinced of Norquay's sincerity in the Manitoba struggle, believing that in any provincial Conservative party could be seen "the cloven hoof of Ottawa authority".

Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 1, 1887.

(52) Gibbon, op. cit., p. 318.

headed "Down, Dog!" (Stephen speaking to Manitoba), Oliver held up this threat as an example of the power of the C.P.R. and its lack of consideration for western interests. (53)

In 1888 rumours were current of the appointment of a select committee of the Senate to enquire into means of access to the Northern Territories, particularly the Peace River District. "A committee of enquiry will be a very good thing," stated the Bulletin, "but a committee of action would be a good deal better. . . . If the Senate desires to improve the means of access (to the North West) let it say to the C.P.R., 'Build a branch line to give access to that country or the policy of disallowance will be abandoned so that others may be allowed to do what you have failed to do!'" (54)

In this same year, under the new Greenway administration, Manitoba finally reached a settlement with the Dominion on the disallowance issue. In return for the Federal Government guaranteeing the interest on a \$15,000,000 issue of $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ C.P.R. bonds, the Company waived the monopoly clause in its charter. Manitoba immediately proceeded with the construction of competing lines, and press comment throughout

(53) Edmonton Bulletin, June 4, 1887.

(54) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 14, 1888.

the North West was exultant. (55) The Bulletin expressed great satisfaction with the final outcome of the Manitoba anti-disallowance agitation, and under the banner "Monopoly Dead" predicted great days for the North West. No doubt, it declared, the C.P.R. would now be compelled to push branch lines into the Saskatchewan country. (56) There was indeed considerable branch line building during the following few years, but it is very doubtful if the effect of competition on service and rates was as decided as the exponents of provincially chartered railways had hoped. (57)

The first C.P.R. train pulled into Calgary in August of 1883. The Bulletin played an aggressive part in the subsequent agitation for a branch line North, for which Edmonton had to wait nearly a decade. (58)

Frank Oliver was never too pre-occupied with politics to find room in his paper for extensive articles of local interest. Items on climate, soil, farming, gardening and agricultural exhibits appeared frequently, along with regular and often detailed meteorological reports covering seasonal weather conditions, precipitation and temperatures

(55) Edmonton Bulletin, April 7, 1888.

(56) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 5, 1889.

(57) Gibbon, op. cit., p. 329.

(58) Numerous Bulletin editorials and articles after 1883.

with particular reference to incidence of frost in the spring and fall. The Bulletin was one of the leading sponsors of the Agricultural Society which grew into the Agricultural Exhibition, and it made repeated appeals for the establishment of a regular government meteorological service on the grounds that "facts, not rumours and prejudice, would show the superior climate and conditions of the Saskatchewan country." (59) Great interest was manifested in the possibilities of the Peace River Country and the Mackenzie Basin which were dealt with in numerous and lengthy articles.

Oliver's interest in schools has already been noted, and he was especially gratified by the decision reached in Edmonton in December, 1884, to organize a school district under the new North West Ordinance. (60) The school question, whether to leave the school as it had been, supported by public subscription, or to proceed with the erection of a formal school district with taxing powers, was settled by referendum. Apparently the voting was accompanied by the usual stretching of qualifications. At any rate the Bulletin refers to the "anti's" bringing in Hudson's Bay Co. employees, the "pro's" bringing up boarders from the hotels, and "both parties swallowing the cast-iron oath like little

(59) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 6, 1888.

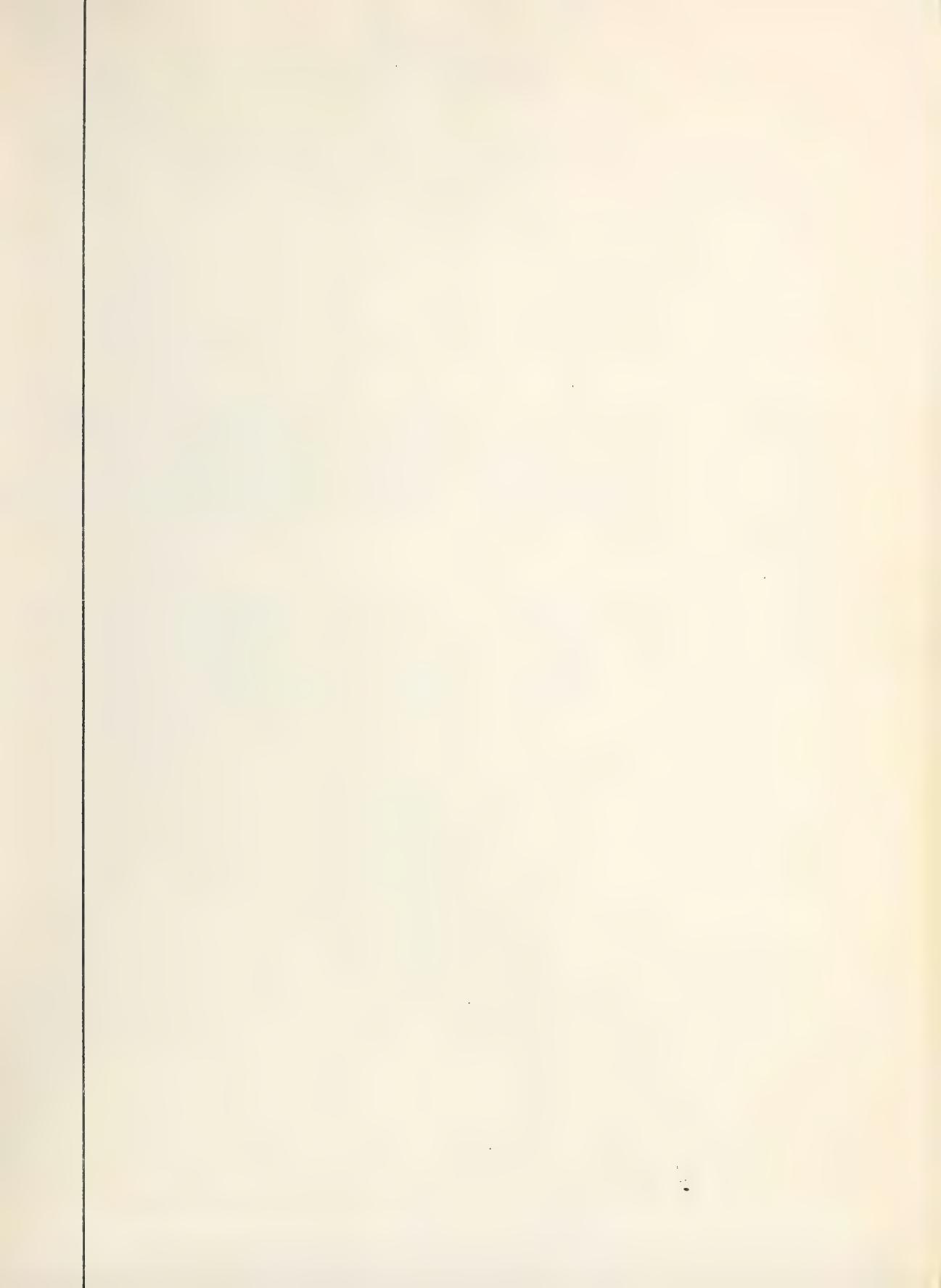
(60) Oliver's School Bill of 1884.

men." (61) "Not the least satisfactory feature developed by the contest," wrote Oliver, "was the fact that although a Protestant school district was being erected, Roman Catholics were found working and voting for its erection as heartily as Protestants." (62)

Although Edmonton's growth was not phenomenal during the decade the community expanded slowly, profiting to some extent by the overland traffic from the C.P.R. at Calgary into the Athabasca country to the north. The Bulletin heartily endorsed a petition for a bridge across the Saskatchewan, the editor taking occasion to point out the natural strategic advantages of the Edmonton site. The late 'eighties witnessed a growing confidence that, despite past disappointments and present difficulties, Edmonton was destined to become one of the most important centres in the West. No man played a more prominent part in the development of the pioneer community than did Frank Oliver.

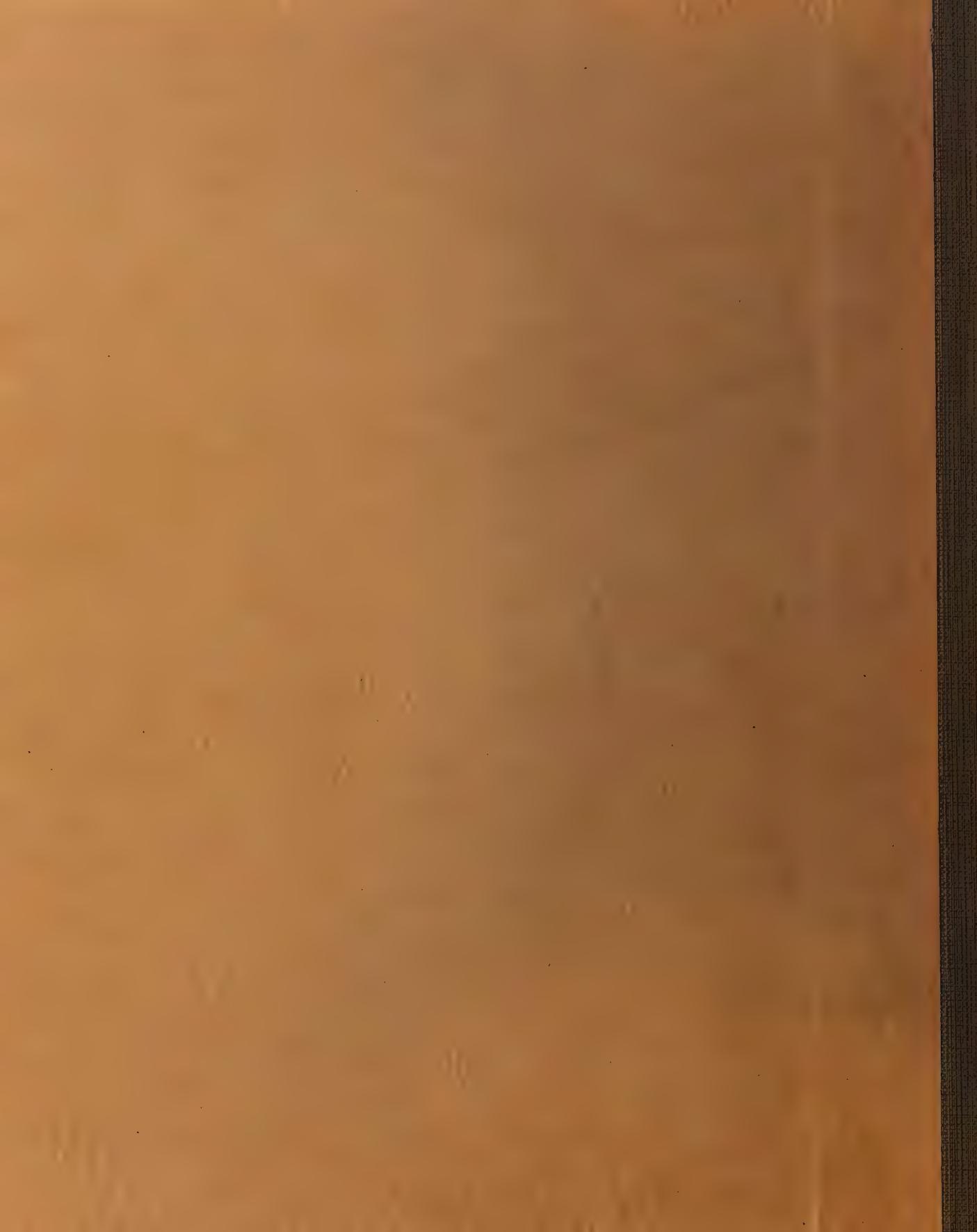
(61) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 27, 1884.

(62) Ibid
See also the Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 20, 1884.



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THE HONORABLE FRANK OLIVER

by

William S. Waddell B.A.

Volume II

Supply Bill of 1888 dealt with funds of Dominion as well as Territorial origin, and in assenting to the Bill, Royal used a formula in vogue where responsible government prevailed. "It is difficult to suppose that at least some of the members of the Legislature did not recognize the fact that hidden in this mass of verbiage was the formal acknowledgement of the Assembly's financial autonomy and right of control of public expenditure." (4) At any rate the Assembly claimed that the Lieutenant-Governor, during the first session, had acknowledged two things: the right of the Assembly to advise on appointments to the Advisory Committee, and its right of control over expenditure of Dominion subsidies as well as Territorial revenue.

From the first, two opposed groups were discernible in the Assembly - the conservative element and the "North West fire-eaters". Even this latter group, of which Oliver was a prominent member, seemed reasonably satisfied that Royal's liberal interpretation of the Act of 1888 was an assurance of at least "practical" responsible government.

Oliver himself, as the session proceeded, began to relegate the constitutional struggle to second place and emphasize the liquor question as the big issue confronting the

(4) Black, op. cit., p. 616.

Assembly. (5) He took the lead in attacking a proposed liquor licensing ordinance and challenged the House to bring the bill to a vote. The three legal experts ruled against the constitutionality of such a vote, "knocking the Assembly cold" (6) and precipitating a debate which lasted for two days. F.W.G. Haultain (District of Macleod) and Frank Oliver were the two principal speakers, the former upholding the correctness of the experts' judgment, and the latter, in a series of fiery and reasoned speeches, advocating the right and power of the Assembly to take the vote. (7)

Oliver was still regarded by many of his fellow-legislators as something of a radical and "kicker", but he was rapidly adding to his reputation as an able speaker and independent thinker. Even the Calgary Herald (Cons.) complimented him on his "powerful speech" respecting the responsibility of the executive, (8) and the Regina Leader said:

Mr. Frank Oliver is a man of honor. He always thinks out his own course. He is against his party on the question of Commercial Union. The other day he spoke strongly against the ballot and voted against it as did Mr. Sutherland. We are not discussing the rightness or wrongness of their views. We merely commend men who use their own reason. (9)

(5) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 1, 1888; Dec. 15, 1888.

(6) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 15, 1888.

(7) Ibid

(8) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 1, 1888. Quoting Calgary Herald.

(9) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 15, 1888. Quoting Regina Leader.

Writing later with reference to the legislative session of 1888, Oliver stated: "They (the Assembly members) believed that in the representatives of the people was centred the authority of the government, and that the Advisory Council and the Lieutenant-Governor were merely appliances by and through which their wishes could most conveniently be given effect." (10) He insisted that the transactions of the first session were carried on "with this understanding as a basis"; and that the business was given the utmost publicity, "and no protest was made from Ottawa that the intent of the North West Act had been misunderstood; while the people of the Territories were thoroughly satisfied both with the manner in which the government was being conducted and with its practical results." (11)

His statement that "no protest was made from Ottawa" was sincere enough, and expressed a belief widely held by the Assembly members. Actually, however, following the concessions made during the first session, Lieut.-Gov. Royal was privately taken to task by the Prime Minister himself for having placed too liberal an interpretation on the Act of 1888. (12) Therefore, despite Royal's wish to favor "a

(10) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 95, gives reasons for Royal's change in attitude. Oliver's statement is from Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 20, 1890.

(11) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 20, 1890. "The Assembly Fight"

(12) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 95.

progressive evolution towards thoroughly responsible government", he had no alternative but to proceed in accordance with the spirit of the Act or resign. It is understandable, then, that he met his second Assembly with the attitude that he must act in accordance with his instructions from Ottawa.

(13)

No sooner had the Assembly met in October, 1889, than a crisis developed over public expenditure. Royal refused to give the Assembly a full statement of the public accounts, in particular of those involving the Dominion grants. Haultain, the recognized leader of the Advisory Council, pointed out that legally the Council was not a cabinet and could not be held responsible for the Lieutenant-Governor's attitude. Actually, the situation stood as follows:

The Advisory Council HAD rendered some assistance in preparing the estimates. The crux of the matter was that the Lieutenant-Governor only conceded of his good will what the Council claimed as a right. The issue was not whether the Lieutenant-Governor DID, but whether he MUST, accept the advice of his Advisory Council; and whether Dominion grants were to be expended under the direction of the Dominion Government or under the direction of the Territorial Assembly. The privilege of advising and directing had been accorded in 1888. When it was withdrawn, the Assembly claimed it as a right. (14)

The Advisory Council resigned on October 29, alleging as one reason among many, "because we cannot continue to work

(13) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 94.

(14) Ibid p. 96.

under a system in which our most important powers are only granted to us in the form of concessions." (15) The Territorial press as a whole showed little sympathy with the Council's action, pointing out that it was too sensitive to criticism from the Assembly, or was seeking powers clearly in contradiction of the Act of 1888. (16)

Royal appointed a new Advisory Council headed by Dr. Brett (District of Banff) and events moved rapidly. Brett, receding from Haultain's position, stated that the Council would confine itself to advice upon the expenditure of money raised within the Territories. Thereupon the Assembly announced its displeasure and passed a vote of non-confidence in the Council. The Council tendered a resignation which Royal refused to accept, on the grounds that since the Council had not as yet even functioned, a vote of non-confidence was meaningless. In November, when the Assembly went into Committee of Supply, it refused to vote supplies until the funds of the preceding year, including the Dominion grant, had been fully accounted for, (17) and suggested that the Advisory Council resign. The Council did resign, and this time the resignation was accepted. Royal found

(15) Oliver, E.H. The Canadian North West; Its Early Developments and Legislative Records
 Publications of the Canadian Archives, No. 9
 Ottawa 1915 2 Vol. p. 1102.
 Hereafter referred to as Oliver, E.H. The Canadian North West.

(16) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. pp. 97-98.

himself unable to form a new Council since he was unable to meet the three conditions laid down by the Assembly: proper accounting for the expenditures of 1888, control of the preparation of all estimates, and control of all expenditures - both of Territorial revenues and Dominion grant. (18)

The majority of the Assembly, made up of those members most favorable to full responsible government, were now dubbed "The Thirteen" by the press. They memorialized Ottawa at some length on the situation, with little result. The Assembly passed an ordinance creating an Advisory Council to be appointed by itself, and then appointed two members to this Council. (19) Western newspapers, with a few notable exceptions including the Bulletin, were very critical of the tactics of "The Thirteen". Legally, Lieut.-Gov. Royal was in the right throughout. The second session of the Assembly was prorogued in an atmosphere of tension and frustration.

Oliver's role in the renewal of the constitutional battle may readily be conceived. One of the most uncompromising and belligerent members of "The Thirteen", he attacked, both in the House and in the columns of the Bulletin, the

(18) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 102.

(19) A step clearly in contravention of the Act of 1888. In 1890 the Dominion Government disallowed the ordinance.

resumption of "one man power" at Regina. Calling attention to prior expectations that Royal would "delegate to his advisory board some of the powers vested in himself, and in this way give the work of local administration to local men representing the people," (20) he submitted that the Governor had not taken the advice of the Advisory Council in many matters of importance, and that the resignation of Haultain's Council was "the strongest possible protest against the existing order of things." (21) Said the Bulletin:

If the resignation of the Advisory Board will effect the desired result, it would not be too much to pay, or if that fails, if the resignation of the whole Assembly would secure it, or at least awaken, not only the people of the Territories, but the Dominion Government, to the urgent necessity there is for the granting of full responsible government to the North West Territories, it would be cheaply secured, and in this case the end would justify the means. (22)

Oliver was bitterly critical of Dr. Brett's Advisory Council, as lacking the confidence of the Assembly, and he warmly seconded Haultain's scathing attacks on this "irregular executive". (23) In reply to those who criticized responsible government on the grounds of expense he enquired:

Do they know what responsible government means?
That it does not necessarily mean a certain amount

(20) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 9, 1889.

(21) Ibid

(22) Ibid

(23) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 30, 1889.

of government machinery, high salaries and general corruption, but that it means responsibility by the representatives of the people for the executive acts of the government as well as for their own legislative acts. That is all.

No doubt it can be made very expensive and very corrupt, and there is little doubt that it can be made very cheap and very effective. . . . It is a matter of intellectual and moral, not of financial, qualifications. (24)

The Bulletin devoted a good deal of space to attacks on the "pro-Royal" press, particularly the Calgary Herald and the Regina Leader. The Conservative papers were rather inclined to view the fight at Regina as a "battle in a teacup" and to suggest that control of the purse strings was not as important as getting adequate subsidies from Ottawa. If the Lieutenant-Governor, they maintained, could expend the grants as efficiently as the Advisory Council, then by all means let him do so. To this view Oliver replied, "What the majority of the Assembly demand is simply that the financial control now assumed by the Lieutenant-Governor shall be vested in the representatives of the people. That is their right and they will be satisfied with nothing less." (25) As for the stand of the North West federal members, the people "desired them to do certain work and yet consented to have them fastened down by party ties so that they could

(24) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 8, 1890.

(25) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 22, 1890.

not do it, or anything else, unless the party wished." (26) This situation could be remedied only by electing "men who will vote for the government just as long as the government does what is right by the North West - and no longer." (27)

During the recess preceding the third session, Lieut.-Gov. Royal took a bold step. He selected an Advisory Council "from among those willing to comply with the law irrespective of the fact whether they possessed the confidence of the House or not." (28) This Council, headed by Dr. Brett, the Bulletin denounced as an insult to the Assembly and to the North West. "Government by minority" was the mildest term Oliver applied to Brett's cabal, and he urged, "It will be for the Assembly during its coming session - the last before a general election - to take such a position on this question as shall make it a clear issue when the election occurs." (29)

When the Assembly met in October, 1890, it was already spoiling for a fight, and acting on the initiative of "The Thirteen" lost no time in passing the following resolution:

They are therefore compelled to believe in the right of the majority not only to pass legislation, but to advise and control in the matter of its being

(26) Edmonton Bulletin, May 24, 1890.

(27) Ibid

(28) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 105.

(29) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 18, 1890.

given effect; that the North West Territories Act interpreted in the light of constitutional usage provides for control of the executive by an advisory council having the confidence of the majority of the House; that the assumption of such control by any members of this House not possessing its confidence is a violation of the spirit and intent of the North West Territories Act, and an infringement upon the rights of the House, against which it feels compelled to enter its most solemn protest and to take such measures to protect itself as best it may. (30)

Oliver had his own way of "deflating" those men who, lacking the Assembly's support, had accepted appointment to Royal's "irregular" Council: "The claim made by the member for Prince Albert (31) that he had rescued the country by his recent taking of office was a sample of assurance so stupendous that it could be illustrated only by a comparison. The story of the Irishman at the Battle of Waterloo would answer. As the Duke of Wellington rode along the line before the battle commenced he halted and demanded of his staff, 'Is Patrick Murphy present?' The answer came, 'He is.' 'Then,' said the Duke, 'in the name of God let the battle begin!'" (32)

The Assembly boycotted the Advisory Council, refusing all motions and legislation offered by its members, and preventing them from serving on any committees. Again the

(30) Journals of the North West Assembly 1888-1904 Regina
Journals of the Session of 1890 p. 38
 Hereafter referred to as J.N.W. Assembly, with year indicated.

(31) J.F. Betts.

(32) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 29, 1890.

Territorial press, excepting "radicals" like the Bulletin, was critical; the general public, apathetic.

The Speech from the Throne and the Address in Reply provoked a "battle royal". The Address, a condemnation of the North West's "one-man government", was finally voted at half-past three in the morning after a thirteen hour debate.

Lieut.-Gov. Royal submitted a statement of his position to the Assembly quoting the Minister of Justice on its correctness, and pointing out, what the Legislature already knew, that he administered the Territories under instructions from the Governor-General-in-Council. The Assembly remained hostile, pointing out in its turn that it valued its own interpretation of the Act of 1888 more than it did that of the Minister of Justice. "The Thirteen" composed a lengthy memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor, couched in scathing terms and denouncing his "tyrannical attitude", but through some oversight failed to deliver it to him. When Royal submitted the Territorial estimates for the year ending June 30, 1891, the Assembly tabled them. A deadlock existed when the House prorogued in November.

In May of the following year Dr. Brett and J.F. Betts, two of the Council members, went to Ottawa with a request for responsible government. They presented this goal as the legitimate aspiration of the Legislative Assembly and the people of the Territories. A fine anti-climax

developed. The Territorial Members of Parliament and Senators at Ottawa informed the Brett-Betts delegation that responsible government was not the aspiration of the people, but only of the ambitious members of the Assembly who saw well-staffed departments and lucrative portfolios in the offing. (33) Actually, North West opinion was divided. Certain substantial elements in the press and among the population feared the expense of responsible government; some opinion held it as premature, a matter to be left until the

(33) Here was a situation in which Brett presented responsible government as the legitimate aspiration of the Territorial Assembly and of the people of the Territories. Oliver was very critical of the M.P.'s who claimed it was the aspiration of the Assembly only, and not of the North West people.

During the autonomy dispute (1900-1905), Haultain presented the achievement of autonomy as the legitimate aspiration of the Territorial Assembly and of the North West people. Oliver, now a Federal M.P., claimed it was the aspiration of the Assembly only, and not of the people of the Territories.

(Edmonton Bulletin, April 11, 1905. Session Report - Oliver in the House of Commons: "I say that the people of the North West Territories have never asked for provincial autonomy." "I am not responsible for what the government of the North West has done.")

A belief in responsible government does not necessarily imply a belief in autonomy, and Oliver was not necessarily inconsistent. However, in urging responsible government he consistently held that the Assembly did indeed represent North West opinion; in the autonomy dispute he discounted the Assembly as not truly representing North West opinion. He may have been right in both instances, or we may have here an interesting example of the fact that "circumstances alter cases."

formation of the provinces; and in stating their opinion the Territorial M.P.'s, who were all Conservatives, were doubtless weighing their standing with their party which was distinctly unfavorable to granting responsible government at this time. (34)

It is scarcely necessary to trace in detail the stand which Oliver took upon the various points at issue between Royal and the Assembly during the third session. He was the uncompromising opponent of Royal and his executive upon any and all occasions. He argued that no stretching of the Act of 1888 was necessary to read into it a guarantee of responsible government, that is, the principle of majority rule, Territorial control of all revenue, and a responsible Council.

They (the Assembly) believed that when the Act declared that the lieutenant-governor should have the power to make ordinances for the government of the North West Territories - that is, to govern - "by and with the advice and consent of the legislative assembly of the Territories" - it meant what it said, and said what the Parliament of Canada meant when the Act was passed.

They believed that in the representatives of the people was centred the authority of the government and that the Advisory Council and the lieutenant-governor were merely appliances by and through which their wishes could most conveniently be given effect. (35)

(34) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. pp. 109-110.
Black, op. cit., pp. 403-404.

(35) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 20, 1890. This is Oliver's opinion as expressed in an article entitled, "The Assembly Fight."

His contention that a correct legal interpretation of the Act of 1888 granted full responsible government to the North West was not admitted by the Dominion Government, nor by Royal and his adherents including a majority of the Territorial press. Even among many of Oliver's colleagues, men as keen as he in the cause of responsible government, there was a recognition that the first real step in the direction of a responsible executive must be an amendment to the Act of 1888. Legally, as is now generally conceded, Oliver was in the wrong and Royal was in the right throughout. (36) The restrictions on North West self-government were implicit and intended in the Act itself. (37) There is no question of Oliver's sincerity; but it would appear that in his zeal for the North West cause he strained the terms of the Act of 1888 past the breaking point.

The third session, disrupted by the battle between Brett's executive and the Assembly, was practically barren of legislation. Oliver laid the blame on "those who by their atrocious usurpation compelled the Assembly to fight in defence of the authority conferred upon it by parliament" (38) and advised the Assembly to "fight, with such

(36) This conclusion is inescapable if E.H. Oliver's analysis of the struggle between Royal and the Assembly is correct. (Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. Passim)

(37) *Supra* p. 159.

(38) *Edmonton Bulletin*, Dec. 27, 1890.

weapons as the statutory law and constitutional usage provided for the right of the majority to rule and the right of the people to control their own money for their own public purposes; let the appeal be to the electors of the North West and the final decision rest with the Parliament of Canada whose Act called the Assembly into existence." (39) He denied the charge frequently levied that the "Thirteen" were striving merely for prestige and personal aggrandizement, and he never tired of reiterating his assertion that they were simply claiming their rights on the terms of the North West Act, properly interpreted. (40) As for the obstructionism of Brett's Council:

Bills on more or less important subjects were prepared, and in still more hours and hours of driveling the House was dared to refuse leave to introduce them. But the leave was refused just the same. As long as the executive refused the House leave to control the funds, so long the executive was refused leave to control the House. This was the simple issue between the executive and the House and no amount of obstruction, or threats, or trickery, or misrepresentation or disreputable tactics of any kind, however skilfully planned on the part of the executive was able to draw the attention of the House from that issue, to which all others were for the time made subordinate. (41)

Oliver was very critical of the Brett-Betts delegation to Ottawa "to advocate government by the majority." (42) He

(39) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 27, 1890.

(40) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 10, 1891.

(41) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 27, 1890.

(42) Supra p. 197.

accused the two Council members of insincerity, suggesting that if they were so anxious to attain their object they might best secure it by resigning from the Advisory Council.

(43) Brett's contention, as revealed in an interview with the Free Press, was that the Act of 1888 should be amended to give the Assembly control of all funds, make the Council responsible to the Assembly for their expenditure, and remove the Lieutenant-Governor from the sittings of the Council. (44) Nevertheless, the Bulletin still maintained that, "Minority rule in the North West was brought about, not through any fault or flaw in the North West Act, but simply by the action of the Lieutenant-Governor - who chose to accept the advice of the minority in preference to that of the majority." (45)

The issue, as already noted, was further confused by the opinions of the Territorial M.P.'s. (46) Lougheed and Davis opposed any change until the North West was divided into two districts; Davin and Macdowall asserted that the people did not want any change and therefore responsible government should wait upon provincial status. Senator Perley also

(43) Edmonton Bulletin, May 23, 1891.

(44) Ibid Quoting the Free Press.

(45) Ibid

(46) Supra p. 199.

opposed any change. The situation became almost ludicrous when Messrs. Richardson and Secord, the other two members of Brett's Advisory Council, sent the following telegram to Prime Minister Abbott and Lieut.-Gov. Royal: "We object to the division of the Territories into three districts with separate councils as proposed by Messrs. Brett and Betts, North West delegates. Same not authorized by us"

(47)

This sort of thing was grist to Frank Oliver's mill. He took occasion to flay the North West federal members, and to ask the world at large just whom Brett and Betts did represent. (48) He intimated that the North West delegates either lacked the ability to convince the federal representatives of the justice of their case or, which was more probable, that they had not made an adequate effort. (49)

(47) Edmonton Bulletin, July 18, 1891.

(48) Ibid

(49) Black, op. cit., p. 404 offers an explanation for the clash of opinion between the members of the Assembly and the Territorial M.P.'s. Recalling the primitive social and economic conditions of the North West at that time, he claims there could have been no very definitely organized force of opinion on any subject. "In so far as any public opinion on political subjects existed at all, it seems generally to have been favorable to the principle of Territorial control of local financial interests." However, under the open system of voting it was not easy to get a free expression of opinion in Dominion elections, and too often the Territorial M.P.'s merely echoed the opinions held by a cabinet at Ottawa "astonishingly ill-informed regarding every western interest and desire."

Exactly what the Brett-Betts mission accomplished is a matter of controversy. At any rate the Dominion Parliament in the session of 1891 passed an amending North West Act which established a new constitution for the Territories.

(50) The Act authorized the Lieutenant-Governor to dissolve the Assembly and call a general election. Granting definite concessions, it removed the legal experts who had sat in the Assembly and made that body wholly elective. It gave the Assembly power over a portion of the Dominion grants, which the Governor was authorized to spend in concurrence with the Assembly or any of its committees. But Section 13 of the Act of 1888, relating to the financial Advisory Council, was not repealed, nor was Section 14 which provided that the Assembly could not pass a money vote unless it had been recommended by the Lieutenant-Governor. However, upon the advice of the Minister of Justice, Royal did not appoint an Advisory Council - "It simply dropped out of existence when the old Assembly ceased to exist." (51) The Act of 1891 vested the executive government of the Territories in the Lieutenant-Governor acting generally upon instructions from Ottawa, and with the advice and assistance of a committee

(50) Statutes of Canada 54-55 Vict., c 22 (1891)

(51) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 111.

composed of members of the Legislative Assembly. (52) Interpreting this latter provision in the broadest possible manner, the new Assembly at its first session created by ordinance an "executive committee" consisting of four members of the Assembly, chosen by itself, but appointed by the Governor and holding office during his pleasure. (53) To give continuity to the administration one member of the committee took up permanent residence in Regina where he was able, between sessions, to work with the Governor. F.W.G. Haultain, in this capacity, became in a sense the first "premier" of the North West Territories, although he himself deprecated the use of the term. The Assembly, from the first, considered the Executive Committee responsible to itself, and despite the limitations implied or stated in the Act of 1891, envisaged its activities as extending to a much wider field than merely finance. (54)

Electoral re-distribution and an increase in the number of seats preceded the elections of 1891 for a new Assembly. Edmonton and St. Albert were again separated into distinct electoral districts. Oliver was returned by acclamation

(52) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 111.

(53) Black, op. cit., p. 625.

(54) Ottawa interpreted the Act of 1891 as limiting the power of the Executive Committee to matters of finance, and specifically to Territorial revenue and "a portion of the Dominion grants." The Dominion Government did not consider the Lieutenant-Governor as bound by the "advice and assistance" of a committee of the Assembly.

for the District of Edmonton. In accepting his nomination he reiterated his stand on responsible government. "I believe," he said, "that the first duty of the new Assembly will be to establish firmly the principle - violated so outrageously during the past year - that the people's money must be controlled by the people's representatives. Until that principle is firmly established, legislation on any subject by the Assembly may be rendered useless." (55) His election statements on dual language and the separate school question were significant, and will be dealt with later. He considered the Territorial elections of 1891 a victory for the reformers. Of the original "Thirteen" who had consistently fought for financial control, seven were re-elected by acclamation. Of the six who had fought against that control, only one was so elected. (56)

The first session of the second Territorial Legislature, held in December of 1891 and January of 1892, was comparatively quiet. (57) Considerable time was taken up with organization, and with the separate school controversy. (58) Haultain, as "premier", together with the other three

(55) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 17, 1891.

(56) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 31, 1891.

(57) Like its counterpart, the first session of the first Legislature in 1888, it was absorbed in organization and busy with detail.

(58) The separate school controversy will be dealt with in due course.

Executive Committee members, Neff, Clinkskill and Tweed, constituted the first Territorial "cabinet". Frank Oliver did not at this, nor at any other time, serve on the executive of the North West government. He had no ambitions in that direction, but adhering consistently to his position as an independent, left himself free to wage the battle for reform from the floor of the House.

During the second session, which was held in 1892, a crisis developed within the Executive Committee itself. Haultain went to Ottawa on government business, and when he returned he found that Cayley, member for Calgary, who had acted for him during his absence, had worked up a faction with the intent of making himself resident member of the Committee. Raising the issue that geographic distribution should be taken into account in choosing executive members, Cayley managed to get through the House a vote of non-confidence, and Haultain's executive resigned. (59) But Cayley had no sooner formed a new executive than Speaker James Ross and his deputy, both Haultain partisans, resigned, and Cayley was unable to find anyone willing to replace them. While the Assembly was struggling with this impasse, Lieut.-Gov. Royal, in exasperation, prorogued the House - a step

(59) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. pp. 113-114. The non-confidence vote was carried by a majority of one, showing how evenly the House was divided between the Haultain and Cayley factions.

of doubtful constitutionality. (60) A belated protest from the Assembly went forth to Ottawa; but Royal was left with Cayley's executive to administer the year's finances.

The "Manifesto of the Thirteen", a denunciation of Royal's action in proroguing the Legislature, was widely published throughout the North West. Oliver characterized the prorogation as "the most extreme and determined attack upon popular rights that has ever been made since the Territories were given any form of local government." (61) He stated that the Governor's action, absolutely unnecessary and unwarranted, was not only unconstitutional, but had "killed" a large amount of nearly completed legislation, and had left the government again in the hands of an "irresponsible" executive. (62) Public opinion as reflected in the press condemned the situation as being ridiculous, and several papers were not slow in pointing out that reaction in the East was bad, and might lead the Dominion Government to retrench in the matter of concessions to self-government in the North West. (63)

(60) Royal's action was frowned upon by Ottawa and he was mildly censured. In this crisis he did not consult the Dominion Government, his executive or the Assembly. His impetuous act was an affront to the Assembly, and it "killed" much useful legislation which was nearly ready for his signature.

(61) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 12, 1892.

(62) Ibid

(63) Ibid Quoting from numerous newspapers in the East as well as in the North West.

On the other hand, throughout the North West itself, the machinations of the Cayley executive and the ill-considered action of Royal perhaps did more to rouse the press in support of responsible government than all the previous asseverations of "The Thirteen". Cayley himself, and "Brett, Betts & Co." came in for a blistering criticism excepting from those papers which were ardently "pro-Royal". The Regina Leader accused Speaker James Ross of extreme partisanship in resigning the chair with the defeat of the Haultain executive, while Oliver warmly defended his fiery fellow-reformer and commended him for his political honesty and independence. (64)

It is almost superfluous to say that Oliver backed Haultain to the limit, and heartily agreed with the latter's view of the situation as expressed in an interview with the Macleod Gazette:

Mr. Cayley and his friends are directly responsible; it was their action that caused our prorogation; they made no honest attempt to obviate a threatened deadlock; they made a bogus nomination for the speakership, which they knew would not be accepted, and then by the aid of the Governor, were enabled to retain office by means of prorogation.

The Lieutenant-Governor must take the responsibility for none of our bills becoming law. (65)

(64) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 15, 1892.

(65) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 22, 1892.
Quoting the Macleod Gazette.

In reply to an attack made upon him by Cayley, Oliver wrote, "He (Cayley) is fortunate that he can deal in personalities to an unlimited extent without danger of his own personality being discussed, as it cannot be fully in the columns of a paper intended for family reading as is the Bulletin." (66)

The Cayley executive, under heavy fire from the Territorial press, continued to administer public affairs throughout 1892. But late in the autumn, Reamer, a member of the executive, died, and a bye-election thus became necessary in the District of Wallace which he had represented. The Cayley and Haultain forces each entered a candidate, and so fine was the balance between the two groups that the victory of Haultain's man Insinger, ^{an} assured the Haultain party a majority when the Assembly should next meet.

The third session of the Assembly was summoned for December 7, 1892, and just before that date the Minister of Justice ruled that the Territorial ordinance creating the Executive Committee was "ultra vires" since it had envisaged advisory matters other than finance. Cayley, who already felt himself to be in an untenable position, seized upon this pretext to resign. When the Assembly met the following day, it accepted the ruling of the Minister of Justice

(66) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 26, 1892. Once again we must note the virulence of frontier journalism.

regarding the unconstitutional position of its executive. It then amended the vetoed ordinance to cover merely the appointment of a committee to advise on finance, and immediately elected the members of the committee from the floor of the House with Haultain as leader. A telegram was then despatched to Ottawa stating that "the House claims the right of the House through its Committee to the Lieutenant-Governor in relation to ALL executive acts and appointments made necessary by Territorial ordinance." (67)

The Assembly then proceeded to repeal the ordinance which had been declared "ultra vires" and in its place passed a bill respecting expenditure. (68) On the new "finance committee" mentioned above which was to control the expenditure, it imposed all the duties formerly borne by the now defunct Executive Committee. "It transformed the committee on financial affairs into a Cabinet." (69) In effect, the Assembly had merely conformed to the terms of the Act in creating and appointing its committee, but it still expected of it functions and powers beyond the terms of the Act. In a large measure it gained its objective, the government

(67) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 116.

(68) I can discover no good reason why the Assembly first amended its vetoed ordinance and then repealed it, instead of simply repealing it and appointing a committee on finance only. It did not, of course, repeal the amended ordinance, but merely the original vetoed ordinance.

(69) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 116.

being in a compromising mood, (70) and Royal, as always, being personally sympathetic to aspirations to self-government. Since the new Committee of the House functioned in many practical ways as a cabinet, there was considerable justification for Royal's closing remarks to his last Assembly in September, 1893: "The Legislature today practically enjoys the rights and privileges of self-government." (71)

Frank Oliver himself felt that the battle had been won by 1893, as may be seen from the following extracts from the Bulletin.

. . . it was not until after the stand taken by the Assembly elected in 1888 had been unmistakably endorsed by the people at the general elections of 1891 and again at the Wallace bye-election in the fall of 1892 that the principle of control by the people through their representatives was finally conceded, as it has been. (72)

At the preceding election (1891) the important question before the electors was as to the right of the majority of the Assembly to control the public affairs of the Territories. That question has now been settled. (73)

Before considering Oliver's contribution to significant legislation enacted by the Territorial Assembly, it will be well to trace very briefly the subsequent constitutional development of the North West government down to 1897. The

(70) The Conservative Party, weakened by the death of Macdonald in 1891, was perhaps more anxious than formerly to conciliate the West.

(71) Oliver, E.H. in Royal Soc. Trans. p. 118.

(72) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 23, 1893.

(73) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 8, 1894.

administration of Lieut.-Gov. Mackintosh which began in 1893 was to witness the achievement of complete responsible government. The secret ballot was first introduced in 1894. (74) Many important ordinances were passed at the various sessions, but despite the gains made during the Royal regime, there were obvious difficulties in the way of effective administration. During the session of 1896 the Territorial Assembly memorialized the Dominion Government asking for a more reasonable basis upon which the federal subsidy could be determined. It also sought more explicit definitions with respect to the powers and organization of the North West government.

Although the Assembly was using the Executive Committee as "a sort of cabinet", it was evident on all sides that this was unconstitutional. Furthermore, the Committee was not authorized to advise except on questions arising from North West ordinances, and its nature made impossible the organization of a regular administration with departments and ministers. "A permanent Committee of the House was something with no precedent to guide it; a feature unique in British constitutional development." (75)

(74) The ordinance respecting the secret ballot was sponsored by Oliver. It will be dealt with in considering the legislative programme of the Assembly.

(75) Black, op. cit., p. 650.

Meanwhile, the expansion of the West tended to direct the attention of the federal government toward western problems. In 1896 Clifford Sifton of Manitoba entered the Laurier Cabinet as Minister of the Interior, an indication of the growing importance of the West in Canadian affairs. In the same year Frank Oliver, now a federal representative, expounded the western viewpoint with a force and clarity that won the attention of the House of Commons and the administration. Shortly before the Territorial session of October, 1897, the Dominion Parliament made important changes in the constitution of the Territories.

The Executive Committee was replaced by an Executive Council which was, in effect, a cabinet. The offices of the government were re-organized and public departments were created. The members of the new Executive Council, headed by Haultain, vacated their seats in the Assembly upon their appointment, and were re-elected by acclamation. Although there were still some reservations in the matter of Dominion grants, the Territories now had a system of government practically the same as that of the provinces. In the Speech from the Throne in the session of 1897, Lieut.-Gov. Mackintosh congratulated the Territories on the attainment of responsible government. (76)

(76) J.N.W. Assembly, 1897, p. 8.

In rounding out an estimate of Frank Oliver as a member of the North West Assembly, reference must be made to his stand on prohibition, dual language, schools, the secret ballot, Dominion subsidies and public works.

The first session of the second Legislature was enlivened by acrimonious debates on the liquor question. Only the ruling of the three legal experts, declaring a liquor bill "ultra vires", prevented the passage of a liquor licensing ordinance in the session of 1888. (77) Subsequently, having received the necessary authority from Ottawa, the second Legislature passed a licensing ordinance, "under which intoxicants might be sold by hotels or liquor shops if the majority of the residents in the district concerned did not oppose the issue of the given license and certain other conditions were complied with." (78) Oliver, as might be expected, opposed the "liquor interests" as strenuously as possible, but he was not in the House to register his vote against the ordinance. (79)

A feature of the session of 1894 was the receipt by the House of a large number of petitions for the suppression of the liquor traffic. Oliver was most active in presenting

(77) *Supra* p. 188.

(78) Black, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

(79) *J.N.W. Assembly, 1891-1892*, p. 117.

these petitions to the Assembly and in urging the desirability of a prohibition measure. However, he found little support from his colleagues. (80)

During the second session a memorial to the Federal Government, introduced by Cayley (District of Calgary), to have the French language discontinued as an official language of the North West government, (81) provoked a bitter debate and a revival of racialism in the Territories. Decrying the attitude of extremists on both sides, Oliver took a tolerant stand. (82) While supporting the memorial, he denied that it was inspired by anti-French sentiment. His support, he stated, was based on two points: first, that the dual language clause in the Act of 1888 was an unwarranted restriction on North West autonomy; and second, that the use of the French language as an official language in the Territories was unnecessary. (83)

(80) J.N.W. Assembly, 1894. *Passim.*

Despite Oliver's extreme prohibitionist views, liquor advertising appeared regularly in the Bulletin. The North West Brewery advertisement in the Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 20, 1894, may serve as an example.

(81) Provision for dual language for the North West Legislature and Judiciary was made in the Act of 1888.

(82) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 9, 1889. "Mr. Oliver made a tolerant speech, showing however that he was for abolition."

(83) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 16, 1889; June 7, 1890.

Inspired by the dispute in the North West, D'Alton McCarthy introduced a dual language bill in the House of Commons in the spring of 1890. McCarthy's bill, to prohibit the use of French in the legislature and in the judicial procedure of the North West, was defeated, but not before it had aroused the already simmering racialism of Ontario and Quebec. Writing on the debates on the dual language bill, Oliver scored Quebec for allegedly attempting to dictate Canadian policy. The dual language dispute in the Territories was, he argued, concerned only with the constitutional and practical aspects of the question; Quebec was trying to aggravate it into a serious racial issue. He stressed that dual language as established by the Act of 1888 was practically a dead issue because of the absence of French representatives in the Territorial Legislature, and that it had never in fact induced the Quebecois to come West. Claiming that, "This North West molehill (the dual language dispute) has been made a mountain in Ottawa," he denounced Quebec's attempt to apply "racial pressure", and concluded: "It has become a question whether Quebec shall or shall not be allowed to dictate the policy of the government of all Canada."

(84)

(84) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 8, 1890.

The Dominion Government later repealed the dual language clause of the Act of 1888, thus leaving the matter in the hands of the North West government. The Assembly then abolished French as an official language of the North West government and Judiciary.

Frank Oliver was more tolerant on the English-French racial and religious issue than he was on many another matter. Further evidence of this fact will be found in his stand on the North West schools question, the Manitoba separate schools dispute, and the school clauses of the autonomy bills.

The North West school system, based on Oliver's school ordinance of 1884 as amended the following year, was actually established in March of 1886 when the necessary expenditures were provided for its operation. A Board of Education, consisting of two Protestants and two Catholics under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant-Governor had control of the educational system of the Territories. The system was divided into two sections, Protestant and Catholic, and each section exercised a very free control over its respective schools.

Increasingly unfavorable to the "separatism" implicit in this system, and perhaps inspired by Manitoba's successful attack on the separate schools in 1890, the North West Assembly, by the ordinance of 1892, took a bold step in the direction of a secularized and "national" school system. The Board of Education was replaced by a Council of Public Instruction consisting of the members of the Executive Committee and two Protestants and two Catholics appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. As the latter four

had no vote, control of schools passed into the hands of the administration which was responsible to the Assembly and the people.

The Council of Public Instruction possessed authority, under the ordinance of 1892 (No. 22) to appoint examiners of teachers, inspectors, a superintendent of education, and other officials, and to prescribe their duties; and to make regulations for the conduct of schools, the training of teachers and the selection and prescription of text books; and to determine all cases of appeals or complaints arising from decisions of trustees or inspectors. (85)

That this authority extended equally to Protestant and Catholic schools moved certain prominent Catholic leaders to state, in petitions to the Assembly, that "the Council had obliterated 'almost wholly the distinction between Catholic and other schools'" (86)

Haultain, as Chairman of the Council, summed up his attitude and that of the North West M.L.A.'s generally in this statement:

The responsibility for the general management of our schools, for the educational policy of the Territories, and for the expenditure of the school vote is above and beyond any sectarian difference. Expenditure and control are inseparable, and so long as schools continue to receive government grants they must be subject to government control. (87)

Oliver subscribed to Haultain's view, and defending the

(85) Lingard Territorial Government in Canada p. 157.

(86) Ibid p. 157.

(87) Ibid p. 157.

School Act of 1892 as being in accordance with the North West Acts of 1888 and 1891, he added, "While religious toleration to a reasonable extent meets the views of a large majority of the people of this country, the control of schools by any church or number of churches does not." (88) He consistently advocated a "middle course" respecting North West schools. He believed that non-sectarian schools were best, if practicable; (89) but as a concession to Territorial conditions did not oppose separate schools so long as they were under the control of the North West administration and were subject to the common system of regulation and inspection. (90) Referring to Manitoba's separate schools agitation in 1889, he wrote:

Whatever may be the result of the proposed move in Manitoba or elsewhere, it is most desirable that any changes that may be made shall be made in the interests of education solely and that they should be free from the remotest suspicion of a spirit of religious intolerance or disregard of the feelings of the religious minority merely because it is a minority. (91)

For several years a member of the Assembly's Standing Committee on Schools, he revealed a continued interest in

(88) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 4, 1893.

See also the Bulletin issue of Nov. 24, 1892.

(89) Edmonton Bulletin, April 3, 1888.

(90) Edmonton Bulletin, April 13, 1888; Nov. 16, 1889; June 7, 1890; Oct. 17, 1891.

(91) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 14, 1891.

all phases of school organization, taxation and management. He was particularly resentful of those who sought to introduce religious intolerance into school issues. Upholding the right of the North West government to establish its school system without the limitations imposed by federal acts, he commended uniformity of school administration as minimizing "separatism" and increasing efficiency.

In 1893, as a step in centralizing and co-ordinating educational administration, the Council of Public Instruction appointed Dr. Goggin as Superintendent of Education and principal of the newly founded Regina Normal School. Oliver approved the appointment as "in line with good educational policy" but intimated that more was needed than a "high-salaried" man, (92) namely, more and better schools and an efficient staff of inspectors. Considerable difficulty had been experienced in training sufficient teachers, (93) and to this task Dr. Goggin addressed himself vigorously as normal school principal. Oliver did not agree that their "high-salaried man" should thus "waste his time". "For the present," he said, "let us educate the children and

(92) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 20, 1893. Dr. Goggin's salary was \$3,600.00 per annum.

(93) In the three years preceding Dr. Goggin's appointment, 55 teachers were "trained" by school inspectors.

let the teachers educate themselves. We can import teachers better and more cheaply than we can educate them, and the best is none too good for us." (94) He agreed that higher education was laudable, but maintained, with good pioneer common sense, that "The great object of our common school system should be to educate children for the farm, and not from the farm." (95)

Oliver's most constructive piece of legislation during his term in the North West Assembly was the ordinance respecting the ballot which he piloted through the Legislature in the session of 1894. (96) Entitled "A Bill to Amend and Consolidate as Amended the Ordinances respecting Elections to the North West Legislative Assembly", the measure was a thorough and comprehensive elections act. (97) It created the machinery for voting by secret ballot. The ballot introduced was especially designed to accommodate the illiterate and the non-English-speaking immigrant. The ballot paper itself was perfectly blank. Each candidate was designated by a certain color as well as by name. In the polling booth were placed several pencils of colors corresponding to the names of the candidates. The voter's choice was

(94) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 20, 1893.

(95) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 30, 1893.

(96) J.N.W. Assembly, 1894, p. 33. Oliver introduced the bill on August 13, 1894.

(97) Ordinances of the North West Territories Regina 1894. Ordinance Number 2 p. 9.

indicated by the color of the lead in the pencil he selected. For those who could read, each candidate's name was painted on the pencil of the proper color. Ballots were not spoiled by being marked in any particular way; color was what counted. The vote was secret, within the limits of frontier political ethics and the prevailing illiteracy. There was no voters' list, but candidates had the right to appoint scrutineers and the right to challenge any voter. This type of ballot continued in use for some time, and despite its obvious imperfections marked an important advance in the direction of the secret ballot of today.

As a member of the Assembly, Oliver was the consistent exponent of increased federal grants. In the Territorial elections of 1894 (98) he declared that the major problem now confronting the North West was no longer a constitutional, but a financial one. The question of financial control had been fought and definitely settled in favor of the Assembly. There remained the securing of a definite and adequate yearly allowance or subsidy in place of the fluctuating annual grant from Ottawa. (99) The North West fight for an adequate and fixed Dominion subsidy continued until the

(98) In the Territorial elections of 1894, Oliver was returned by acclamation.

(99) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 8, 1894.

very eve of autonomy in 1905. To his campaign in the Assembly and later in the House of Commons, for an adequate and "dignified" (100) financial settlement, Frank Oliver added the weight of the Bulletin and many a fiery platform address. (101)

The member for Edmonton was never too pre-occupied to heed the practical demands of his constituents. He exercised constant vigilance to assure Edmonton of its full share of moneys appropriated by the North West government for public works. (102)

In the field of federal politics the 'nineties furnished ample evidence of increasing laxity and corruption in the Conservative administration. In 1890 Macdonald, still the master tactician, unexpectedly asked for dissolution and a general election. The Liberals were quick to find discreditable motives for this move. Actually, the veteran Tory leader did not dare delay any longer the last ditch stand of a disintegrating "Macdonaldism".

(100) North West delegates had to make an annual "pilgrimage" to Ottawa to "beg" the year's finances. Oliver used the word "dignified" in envisaging a fixed annual grant which would obviate the necessity of this humiliating trip.

(101) Frequent references in the Bulletin throughout these years testify to Oliver's efforts on behalf of a proper financial settlement for the North West.

(102) His interest in expenditures for public works is evident in numerous Bulletin reports during the period.

Frank Oliver charged that the Manitoba separate schools question lay at the root of the Conservative strategy. Sir John still relied on the support of both Ontario and Quebec. The year for the possible disallowance of the Manitoba separate school bill was not quite up. If Macdonald disallowed it he would antagonize Ontario; if he allowed it he would antagonize Quebec. An election immediately would not only keep both in suspense, but secure their support in hopes of getting a favorable decision on the schools question.

Rallying around "the old man, the old flag and the old policy", the Conservatives played up patriotism and distorted the Liberal plea for unrestricted reciprocity with the United States into annexationism and "veiled treason". The Liberals rested their case on reciprocity, the failure of the National Policy, and the corruption and inefficiency of the Macdonald regime.

Oliver was not a candidate in the western federal elections of March, 1891. The battle for responsible government in the Territories was at this time mounting to its climax, and he refused to "take his hand from the plough" by entering the federal field. The candidates for the District of Alberta were D.W. Davis, M.P., (Cons.) Calgary; and James Reilly (Ind. Cons.), Calgary. Oliver threw the weight of the Bulletin against Davis, and for lack of an alternative supported Reilly as an independent. He charged

that Davis had kept none of the promises made four years earlier - except the support of Sir John A. Macdonald. The election was hotly contested in Edmonton, with Oliver stumping on behalf of Reilly, and Dr. H.C. Wilson on behalf of Davis.

Oliver ridiculed Davis unmercifully. He listed the 14 planks in the Davis platform of 1887 and then listed the result of each in such a way as to show that only number one had been lived up to, that is, "Sir John". Plank number seven and its implementation appeared as follows:

- 7 : Bridging of principal rivers.
- 7 : Rivers are bridged - in winter.

His support of Reilly as an "independent Conservative" was rather inconsistent with his attitude toward the "independent Liberal" Lafferty in the elections of 1887. (103) Apparently, however, he felt himself justified in basing his support of Reilly on the latter's declaration of "independence", in opposition to Davis's obvious and admitted "partyism".

The election, climaxing a number of rousing meetings, was quieter than usual and the customary charges of corruption were largely lacking. The proceedings, the Bulletin reported, were fairly orderly, but "towards the close of the poll,

(103) *Supra* p. 148.

the votes being nearly all in and some whiskey having got around, a little scrap was indulged in by a few of the boys but the consequences were not serious and no arrests were made." (104) Davis was returned by a wide margin, and once again the Conservatives made a clean sweep of the West. But contrary to Oliver's prediction, Macdonald lost heavily in Ontario and Quebec. The days of "Macdonaldism" were plainly numbered.

Oliver attributed the Conservative victory in the West to three factors: lack of genuine Liberal interest in the North West, the advantages held by government candidates in a short campaign waged in very large constituencies, and government influence and patronage in the Territories. (105) He still feared the implications of "commercial union", and his reference to the unrestricted reciprocity issue in the Dominion campaign was significant. "The feeling against the high tariff policy has become so strong throughout Canada that Sir John owes his present reduced majority rather to the active or passive aid of liberals who could not approve of the unrestricted reciprocity policy advocated by their party . . . than to any merit of his own" (106) He

(104) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 7, 1891.

(105) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 14, 1891.

(106) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 21, 1891.

further referred to unrestricted reciprocity as a "wildfire policy" which had "lost a good deal of true liberal support." (107)

The death of Sir John A. Macdonald on June 6, 1891, marked "the close of an era in Canadian history." (108) Oliver's eulogy of Sir John, whose system he had ceaselessly and virulently attacked, in season and out during the past decade as all that was reprehensible in Canadian "partyism", may best be given in his own words and without comment:

. . . it appeared that with Sir John power was an end rather than a means and that unlimited confidence reposed in him especially in late years by the majority of the people, while a fitting acknowledgment of good service, tended to place the interest of the community below the aggrandizement of the individual and kept in abeyance on the grounds of political expediency many questions arising from the development of the country whose settlement was necessary to its welfare.

But when the political course of the country during the past 24 years is considered, with the difficulties that have been encountered and overcome or avoided, and when it is remembered that its growth although gradual has been healthful to the last degree, that at no time in its history was the population as great, intelligence and education as widely diffused, its business institutions on as solid a basis or the patriotism of its people more thoroughly to be relied on, it will be seen that although as great abilities may not be available in Canada's next political leader, as varied talents will not be as necessary as in the days of Sir John. His work was to keep the diverse and scattered elements of the country in touch with each other by any means until they had begun to grow

(107) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 21, 1891.

(108) Edmonton Bulletin, June 13, 1891. Editorial.

together. That work he did, and it now remains for his successors to develop the growth and greatness which under his auspices was so well begun. (109)

Despite "ignoble means", Oliver continued, Confederation, the annexation of the North West, the National Policy and the C.P.R. would all stand out as great achievements in the days to come. (110)

His comments on the governmental re-organization necessitated by Macdonald's death were pointed enough. "A government," he warned, "with Tupper as premier, Chapleau as Minister of Public Works and A.W. Ross as Minister of the Interior would steal Canada poor in six months." (111) He expressed general satisfaction with Senator Abbott as Sir John's successor in the Dominion's highest office, and with the appointment of the Hon. T.M. Daley as Dewdney's successor in the Interior Department. His parting shot at Dewdney showed no diminution of the animosity with which he had always regarded his political arch-enemy: "Not a statesman, not a politician; . . . a lucky adventurer or rather parasite . . . of no talent." (112) Like many men of strong views and intense moral earnestness, Frank Oliver could be a good hater.

(109) Edmonton Bulletin, June 13, 1891.

(110) Ibid

(111) Edmonton Bulletin, June 20, 1891.

(112) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 24, 1892.

In September of 1894 Wilfred Laurier paid a visit to Edmonton. Oliver played a prominent part in the welcome, serving as chairman of the reception committee and presiding at the immense reception given in the Liberal chief's honor. Despite Oliver's oft-repeated claim to be an independent, and his criticism of certain of the party's policies, the western press already classed him as a Liberal.

(113) This appellation he denied. Yet he was by temperament and outlook a frontier "Grit". He despised "partyism", but any sympathy he had shown for party or party men had almost invariably leaned toward the Liberal side. It is quite probable that Laurier's Edmonton visit was a predisposing factor in Oliver's decision to enter the federal political field in 1896.

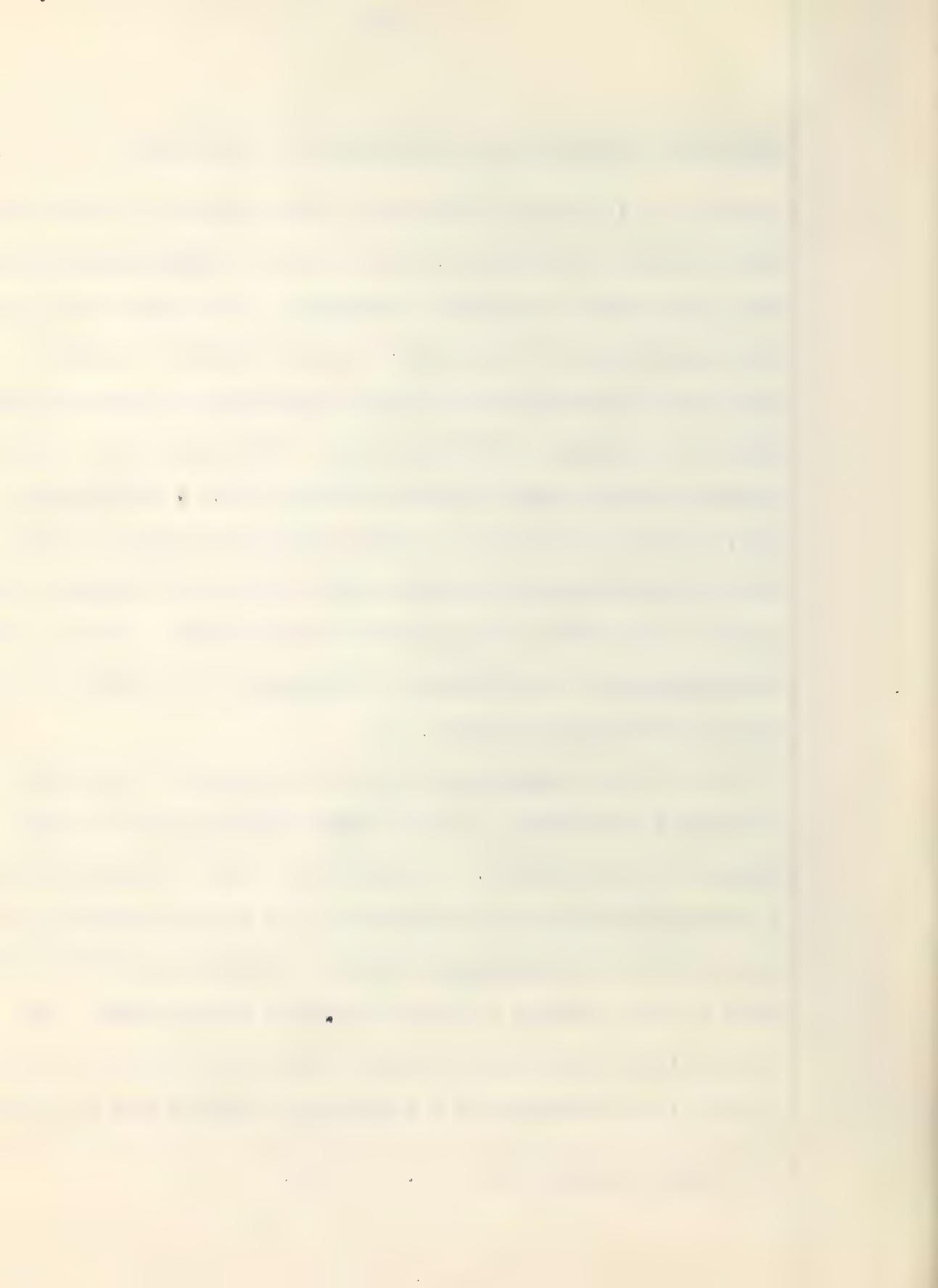
(113) Supra p. 188, the Edmonton Bulletin quoting the Regina Leader. Referring to Oliver the Leader said, "He is against his party on the question of Commercial Union." In context, "his party" could refer only to the Liberals. Note that this Leader item was written in 1888. It would be easy to multiply instances of the tendency of the western press, even as early as the 'eighties, to classify Oliver simply as a Liberal.

Chapter 8 Edmonton and the Bulletin 1888-1896

During the 'nineties Edmonton's development was more rapid than during the previous decade, and the Edmonton Bulletin kept pace with the growing community. The format and general appearance of the paper was drastically altered in 1892 with the introduction of larger type and an increasing emphasis on display advertisements. Publication of a semi-weekly edition began in May of that year. The Bulletin claimed its full share of credit for the growth of Edmonton and the surrounding district, and first and foremost took pride in its wide and adequate news coverage. News, stated the Bulletin, is what makes a newspaper - not plate material and "whiskered jokes". (1)

In 1893 the Bulletin format was enlarged, the number of pages was increased, and the paper began to take on the shape of a city daily. In November, 1893, Oliver installed a steam plant to run the presses, and in the summer of 1894 he erected a new Bulletin office - an imposing brick structure of two storeys - on the original office site. The steam plant and presses occupied the stone basement, the first floor accommodated the Bulletin offices and W.T. Henry,

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 1, 1892.



"Gent's Furnishings", while the second storey was rented as business office space. The first Bulletin issue printed in the new building appeared on October 22, 1894. The paper was further enlarged in June, 1893; December, 1896; and November, 1899, so that it enteredⁱⁿ the new century a six-page semi-weekly which did not need to take second place in news coverage and influence to any paper west of Winnipeg.

(2)

Until 1898, when the Bulletin passed under the control of the Bulletin Co. (Ltd.), Oliver was the paper's sole proprietor. He took great pride in the Bulletin's reputation for "fair dealing and plain speaking", and maintained that the first and chief aim of his paper was "to be a NEWSPAPER."

(3)

The completion of the C.P.R. in 1885 had left Edmonton still some 200 miles off the railway, but with the arrival of the Calgary and Edmonton line in 1891, Edmonton began to come in to its own and to press volubly for an adequate immigration policy. The following news item appeared in the Bulletin of December 14, 1889:

At the request of the Edmonton Board of Trade, Mr. Frank Oliver has consented to remain a couple of weeks longer in the east to deliver lectures in Ontario on the North West

- (2) Changes noted from actual Bulletin files.
- (3) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 1, 1894.

A better selection could not have been made. There is no person in this district and probably none in the Territories, who could so well represent the capabilities, advantages and resources of this country.

Oliver was particularly interested in drawing to the Territories settlers who would otherwise be lost to the United States, and during the closing weeks of 1889 he delivered several "immigration speeches" in Western Ontario, and made contacts and collected information valuable in encouraging western immigration. (4) He was very critical of Ottawa's apathy regarding immigration, and made numerous suggestions to expedite a westward flow of settlers. He advocated supplying C.P.R. trains with maps and tracts on the Territories, and the appointment, as eastern immigration agents, of men with actual North West experience. (5) Continuing the battle against the land sharks and speculators, he defended the policy of second homesteading as a prime inducement to the Ontario pioneer to come West: "The policy of no second homesteads is distinctly in the interests of the wholesale land speculator and in no other legitimate interest whatever." (6) Referring to the continued drain of emigrants to the United States, he pointed out with

(4) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 15, 1890.

(5) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 16, 1889.

(6) Edmonton Bulletin, April 6, 1889.

considerable justice: "Had the Canadian Government not been criminally negligent the great exodus of Eastern Canadians to these far Western States need never have occurred. If the present opportunity to retrieve the mistake is not seized and turned to account, the original offence will be doubled." (7) In reply to a query of the Montreal Star, "Where are the Immigrants?" Oliver replied:

It must be evident that to secure rapid settlement of the country there must be cheap land and cheap and abundant railway communication. The land policy that has been pursued at least since 1881 has been to reserve absolutely from settlement at least half of the land, and until the monopoly clause was done away with, to absolutely prevent railway competition. Under such a policy the country could not settle rapidly and did not, nor will it until there is substituted for it a policy of free land and railway extension. (8)

The Bulletin featured, in issue after issue, lengthy articles and editorials "booming" the Saskatchewan country and designed to attract immigrants. (9)

The Bulletin makes the claim that for purposes of grain growing and stock raising combined - that is for mixed farming - the Edmonton District of the North Saskatchewan country comprising an area two-thirds as great as the province of Manitoba, possesses advantages superior to those which are found in any other section of the great west, whether south or north of the international boundary line. (10)

(7) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 3, 1889.

(8) Edmonton Bulletin, July 6, 1889.

(9) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 1, 1890; Mar. 15, 1890; Mar. 22, 1890; April 12, 1890. Numerous and lengthy articles in the Bulletin all through the early 'nineties.

(10) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 30, 1890.

Oliver's first choice of immigrants was those from the eastern provinces; his second preference, those from the British Isles. He was averse to immigration from central Europe. This aversion persisted and had an important bearing upon his attitude toward Sifton's later policy of "un-selective" immigration, and upon the modifications he made in this policy when he replaced Sifton as Minister of the Interior. The following Bulletin editorial is an important declaration of viewpoint. Referring to a Free Press news item that North West agents were to be sent to Scandanavia and central Europe to encourage immigration, he expressed disagreement with such a policy and stated:

There is a difference between allowing them (central Europeans and Scandanavians) to have these lands and homes and soliciting them to take them .

• • •
When people come to our country and ask us for room to settle they accept our terms, social, and political; when we go and solicit their coming we accept their terms social and political, which in so far as they are different from ours are disadvantageous to us. (11)

He went on to suggest that the British Isles contained "plenty of good material", and expressed himself as averse to an influx of central Europeans who were "bound to be drawn from the poorer and less ambitious classes." (12)

(11) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 2, 1890.

(12) Ibid

By the spring of 1890 the newly chartered Calgary and Edmonton Railway Co. was preparing to push its line north from the C.P.R. into the Upper Saskatchewan country. Despite the road's name there was as yet no certainty that Edmonton would be its terminus and the eventual crossing point of the North Saskatchewan river. Other settlements including Ft. Saskatchewan and Clover Bar urged their advantages as the logical terminus, and Edmonton, mindful of its "sidetracking" by the C.P.R. in 1882, devoted itself with furious energy to pressing its claim. Spearhead of the "Edmonton for terminus" battle was the Bulletin, which took as an ominous sign the Dominion's continued delay in erecting much needed federal public buildings in the village. (13)

The formal turning of the first sod in the construction of the Calgary and Edmonton Railway took place on July 21, 1890, (14) and as the line advanced north, "townsite" and "terminus" fever mounted steadily. Confident of eventual victory, Edmonton experienced another "boom", and with a fine lack of restraint let itself go on the subject of its natural advantages as the agricultural centre of the West. Issue after issue of the Bulletin poured forth an endless stream of articles on the land, the soil, the climate, and

(13) Edmonton Bulletin, May 17, 1890; May 24, 1890.

(14) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 2, 1890.

the resources. Said the Bulletin's editor, "Come and see for yourself, and if you don't care to come, never mind, for plenty of others will be glad to take your place. This district needs settlers, desires settlers, will welcome and accomodate settlers, but does not require to beg for settlers any more." (15)

Early in the winter of 1890 the line reached Red Deer, where operations were suspended until the following spring. The new year opened with an acrimonious dispute involving Edmonton, Clover Bar and Fort Saskatchewan regarding the location of the river terminus of the Calgary and Edmonton line. There were claims and counter claims, petitions and counter petitions, meetings and counter meetings. The Bulletin aired the whole question very thoroughly, and Oliver was perhaps the most aggressive champion of Edmonton's cause.

Whether all this furore actually influenced the Calgary and Edmonton Co. is not clear. At any rate in early July the Bulletin was happy to announce that "the terminus is all settled." (16) The first through train from Calgary pulled into the hastily constructed station across the river from Edmonton at 11 P.M., Monday, July 27, 1891.

(15) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 4, 1890.

(16) Edmonton Bulletin, July. 11, 1891.

With no bridge across the Saskatchewan, the terminus had to remain on the south side of the river. Edmonton realized only too well the danger to its own future development if the south side "boomed" and became the major townsite. Just before the actual arrival of the Calgary and Edmonton, Oliver wrote, regarding the south side terminus and town-site: "The only point at which there is any clashing of interests is, if the railway company attempts to use its private influence to secure undue advantages in the location of the public offices or the construction of public works of any kind that would better serve the public interests by being on the North side." (17) Edmonton became increasingly sensitive to any suggestion of the south side's predominance, and in reply to a letter in the Free Press (Winnipeg) predicting that the south side would be the site of the future city, Oliver stated heatedly, "For the present, Edmonton - the old, only and original - is doing very well thank you, out of the fact of its having been given railway communication, and the surrounding district is increasing in population and prosperity at a more rapid rate than any other section of the North West." (18)

The proclamation incorporating the Town of Edmonton took

(17) Edmonton Bulletin, July 18, 1891.

(18) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 5, 1891.

practical effect on February 10, 1892, when the first council of the new town was chosen, with Matt. Macaulay elected mayor by acclamation. The Bulletin of the next few months was filled with "Town Council Minutes", "Municipal Notes", claims for public buildings, and news items on the Edmonton Electric Lighting and Power Co. Edmonton, keenly conscious of its new status and fairly exuding civic pride, was looking confidently to the future.

At this critical juncture the famous attempt to "steal" the land office stirred up a veritable hornet's nest, and precipitated a situation reminiscent of the days of the claim jumping and "The Vigilantes". On the afternoon of Saturday, June 18, Tom Anderson, the Dominion Timber Agent, attempted to move the books and effects of the Lands Office over to a location on the south side of the river, immediately opposite the depot being built there for the immigration office. Books and effects were already loaded on the dray when certain Edmonton citizens appeared upon the scene, unhooked the team of horses, and removing the nuts from the hubs of the dray wheels, defied the agent to proceed with the removal. That evening a mass meeting was held, from which resolutions of protest moved by Mayor Macaulay were forwarded to Ottawa. So intense was public indignation at the attempted "steal" that "the land agent was burned in

effigy at the flag pole between McDougall's store and the Imperial Bank." (19)

The following day, Sunday, passed quietly enough. On Monday morning Inspector Griesbach arrived from Fort Saskatchewan, but so as not to provoke "an incident", he left his 20 Policemen at Rat Creek on the outskirts of the town. Thereupon, "Mayor Macaulay, Councillor Cameron and J.A. McDougall, J.P.'s, issued an order calling out the Home Guards - organized in '85 by General Strange - to keep the peace, that is the land office. At 1 P.M. nearly every able-bodied man in town - most of them armed - appeared at the town clerk's office, ready for any event. Up to 4 o'clock (this writing) the police have not appeared and quiet reigns." (20)

Later in the day a telegram came from Dewdney, who was at this time Minister of the Interior, assuring the Council that Anderson had been acting under his orders, and that removal of the Lands Office was intended as a temporary measure for the convenience of immigrants arriving on the Calgary and Edmonton line. A thoroughly aroused citizenry was not convinced, the alarm bells were rung, and a crowd collected at the Lands Office to "object" to the removal if attempted.

(19) Edmonton Bulletin, June 20, 1892.

(20) Ibid

The next morning it started to rain and the Police began putting the books, which were still stacked on the dray, back into the shelter of the office. Misinterpreting their actions, someone rang the alarm. "In 8 minutes not less than 150 men were there - and a hundred or two coming." (21) There was, however, no violence; and the crowd, seeing that the Police were merely acting to protect the Lands Office books, soon dispersed.

Telegrams came from Lieut.-Gov. Royal and other government officials pointing out again that the proposed removal was only a temporary convenience for immigrants arriving on the South Side; (22) and even Wilfred Laurier, Opposition Leader in the House of Commons, sent the "insurgents" a message of reassurance.

The result of the disturbance, a victory for Edmonton's irate citizens, was the establishment of a sub-office on the South Side. By Thursday morning Anderson was again receiving land entries at the North Side office, while Assistant Agent Jules Royal was doing business at the new South Side sub-office.

Frank Oliver took an exceedingly uncharitable view of

(21) Edmonton Bulletin, June 23, 1892.

(22) Although the settlement on the south side of the river was incorporated as "Strathcona", the terms "South Side" and "North Side" gained increasing currency in the 'nineties.

the government's part in the land office "battle". Refusing to believe that the protestations of Dewdney and Royal were sincere, he insisted that an attempt to steal the land office had been made, and that it had been made by speculators operating through government influence. His first report on the affair, a front page article headed -

ROBBERS
Attempt to Steal Land Office

- charged that the attempt was made in order to "boom" South Side property of Osler, Hammond and Nanton, "in a large slice of which property the agent has an interest." (23)

The second Bulletin report, on June 23, was headed in large type:

DIRTY DEWDNEY
Is in the Steal

He shows his hand - It is not clean
Would shed blood to boom his town lots
Cowardice his only redeeming quality

There followed a virulent attack on the officials and speculators alleged to be involved, and a lengthy report on the proceedings of the citizens, in which Oliver himself had played a prominent part. Even after the matter had been settled, the Bulletin refused to be mollified. Oliver repeated his charges that certain persons had attempted to use their official position to advance their private interests:

(23) Edmonton Bulletin, June 20, 1892.

. . . hogs, who look upon the government only as a swill factory, and who will squeal for or against anything on the chance of thereby securing a greater share of swill.

. . . it was what the people supposed, a side scheme put up by the local agent, the inspector of agencies and the minister of the interior at the instigation of those very slick gentlemen, Osler, Hammond and Nanton, who trusted if they got away with the office quietly to be able to give sufficient reasons for keeping the town office closed.

It was attempted to boom Osler, Hammond and Nanton's townsite. (24)

As in 1882 there was considerable outside criticism of the propensity of Edmonton citizens to take matters into their own hands. Again the Bulletin found the action taken by the community fully justified. "People do not like to be put in the position of having to use physical force to protect their rights, and they will be slow to forget who caused them to be put in that position on this recent occasion." (25)

Dewdney's letter to Mayor Macaulay blaming him and the citizens for hasty and ill-considered action brought a sharp response from the Bulletin, and the suspension of postmaster A.D. Osborne for "being seen carrying a gun on the streets and defying the government", provoked an editorial headed "The Right of Opinion" in which Oliver pointed out that Edmonton had defied, not the government, but its

(24) Edmonton Bulletin, June 23, 1892.

(25) Edmonton Bulletin, June 27, 1892.

mistaken agents. (26)

The attempted land office "steal" was not easily forgotten, and rumbling echoes of the episode continued in the Bulletin for several months. The actual and potential rivalry between the North and South Sides of the river had been clearly revealed. There was little hope at this time of a second transcontinental railway - to run through the North Saskatchewan country. It appeared that only the construction of a bridge, enabling the Calgary and Edmonton to cross the river, would save the original pioneer community from being dwarfed by its growing south side competitor. During the next few years Oliver and the Bulletin, realizing that railway extension to the North Side was now Edmonton's number one civic problem, led the fight for federal aid in building a bridge across the Saskatchewan. (27)

Meanwhile, great talk of an electric railway connecting with the South Side by way of the lower ferry, came to nothing. (28)

(26) Edmonton Bulletin, July 25, 1892.

(27) The bridge question was very prominent in the Bulletin from 1892 on.

(28) Edmonton Bulletin, June 26, 1893. Subsequent issues of the Bulletin throughout the 'nineties.

Chapter 9 Member of the House of Commons 1896-1905

Under Macdonald's successors the Conservative party continued to decline, while the Liberals, under the inspired leadership of Laurier, grew in strength and laid plans to unseat their rivals in the next general election. The Manitoba separate schools question was the rock on which the Government eventually foundered. The Liberals made the most of this issue in the campaign of 1896.

The Conservatives had been struggling since 1890 with the delicate question of Manitoba's establishment of a non-sectarian school system, an act which the Catholics claimed to be a violation of the rights and privileges specifically granted by the Act of 1870 under which Manitoba entered Confederation. The question had been before the Supreme Court and the Privy Council, which ruled that the Dominion had the right to pass remedial legislation in protection of "minority rights" in Manitoba.

Mackenzie Bowell's remedial bill of 1896 split the Conservative party and forced his resignation. Dr. Charles Tupper was called in to save the party, but his remedial bill encountered a filibuster which forced him to call for dissolution of the House and a general election. The Liberals accused their opponents of trying to "coerce"

Manitoba, and Laurier advocated a policy of conciliation and the appointment of a commission to consider the separate schools dispute.

The tariff was the second major issue of the campaign, the Liberals favoring a tariff for revenue, but cautiously denying that they stood for any sweeping tariff reforms prejudicial to the manufacturing interests.

As early as the spring of 1895 western political groups, anticipating a general election some time during the summer, began organizing forces. Frank Oliver, backed by the North West Liberals, declared his intention of contesting the Federal constituency of Alberta as an independent. His decision to enter the federal field is not difficult to understand. The constitutional battle in the Territorial Assembly was as good as won. Responsible government needed only the anticipated Act of 1897 to make it a legal as well as a practical reality. F.W.G. Maultain, a brilliant political personality and organizer, overshadowed his colleagues and dominated the Assembly as first premier of the North West administration. Although, like Oliver, a firm exponent of Territorial non-partisanship, he inclined toward Conservatism as Oliver did toward Liberalism. As a rugged individualist and independent, Oliver had never served on the North West executive. Past events and present circumstances did not promise him a satisfying future in the North

West Government, nor incline him to confine his continued struggle for North West rights to the Territorial field.

He was sincerely convinced, apart from the quite understandable appeal of the larger sphere, that he could henceforth best serve the North West, not as a crusading member of the Territorial Assembly, but as a member of the House of Commons. The Liberals were clearly on the way in, and he saw himself, as a North West representative with Liberal backing, well able to wring from a Liberal administration North West concessions which had been demanded from the Conservatives in vain. If such concessions, involving lower tariffs and freight rates, increased Territorial subsidies and railway extension, could be made to include badly needed public buildings for Edmonton and a bridge over the North Saskatchewan, so much the better. It is quite possible, too, that he had already come under the influence of Laurier who, if not a second George Brown, was at least an inspired and inspiring leader who, he hoped, would champion the cause of the West and harry the Conservatives out of the land.

Oliver's chances of being elected were excellent. He had already been twice considered as a federal candidate, and as proprietor of the Bulletin and long-time member of the Territorial Assembly he was widely and favorably known. Even his political enemies conceded his integrity, his

aggressiveness, and his devotion to western interests. The Liberals, desperate to beat the Conservatives at last, came to regard him as their white hope. True, he frequently indulged in outspoken criticisms of the party policies, but so far as he was inclined to "orthodoxy" at all, it was certainly toward Liberalism. The Liberals were already certain that they recognized, under his belligerent and quite sincere protestations of independence, the shape of a fellow-Grit, and they hastened to claim him as their own. Nor did he have the support of the Liberals alone. He had the vote of every frontier radical who hated the North West "bureaucracy", the National Policy and the C.P.R., and of most of those Northern Alberta Conservatives who placed the interests of the North West above the dictates of party. (1)

Frank Oliver was originally nominated by a convention of Liberals in Calgary on February 27, 1895. Dr. Lafferty, in opening the nominations, stated that he hoped "they had met to nominate a man who, while he would support the Liberal party on its platform of tariff for revenue as against tariff for protection, would be a man above party and vote not so much for party as for the best interests of the country."

(2)

(1) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 4, 1895. Oliver claimed the support, not only of Liberals, but of the Patrons of Industry, numerous independents and Edmonton Conservatives.

(2) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 7, 1895. Dr. Lafferty was president of the Calgary Liberal Association.

A.L. Sifton was first nominated, but he refused to stand.

(3) Oliver was then nominated, and Sifton seconded the nomination with the remark that "Oliver was liberal enough to suit him and independent enough and honest enough to be a North West man first, last and all the time." (4) In accepting the nomination Oliver declared his independence. "It is important," he said, "that your representative should be in a position to advocate your interests . . . in parliament without party hindrance even if he has to do it without party support. Speaking generally I may say that I will support a policy of development for Alberta I will bind myself to do all in my power to see that each section and every interest receives fair and equal treatment I have no personal interest to serve or ambition to gratify." (5) His first election address in the Bulletin stated, "The stand which I take with the full knowledge and consent of those who have tendered me their support is that of an independent as to party, but not as to principle. (6)

During March and April he addressed several large meetings in the South. Speaking in Edmonton, he attacked the

(3) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 7, 1895. A.L. Sifton later succeeded Rutherford as Premier of Alberta. It appears that Sifton and others had already decided to nominate Oliver.

(4) Ibid

(5) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 4, 1895.

(6) Ibid

National Policy, the C.P.R., and party representation, and declared, "As to the political position I occupy in the contest, it is that of an independent liberal, nominated by the liberal party, but independent of party to the extent that I am expected to advocate first and foremost the interests of this country. It is the interests of the constituency first, and the principles of the party next." (7)

The Conservatives did not nominate during 1895, although D.W. Davis, M.P., T.B.H. Cochrane, and F.W.G. Haultain were all mentioned as possibilities in the western press. When it became evident that no general election would be held in 1895, the Oliver campaign subsided. Throughout the winter there was a good deal of political manoeuvring, particularly among the Conservatives, and with the election definitely approaching in 1896, campaigning was resumed in the spring. Oliver resigned from the North West Assembly in May, 1896, confirming his federal candidacy. D.W. Davis refused to stand for re-election. His opponents were uncharitable enough to impute this decision to his certainty that he would stand no chance against Oliver. The Conservatives finally settled on T.B.H. Cochrane, a retired rancher of Calgary, as their candidate.

Oliver's election address in the Bulletin of June 1, 1896,

(7) Edmonton Bulletin, April 1, 1895.

set forth a platform in which he repeated his pledge as an independent, supported a tariff for revenue, denounced railway monopoly, advocated lower freight rates, and called for a better deal for the North West. On the separate schools question he opposed the policy of coercion as implied in the government's remedial bill, and supported Laurier's policy of conciliation.

Cochrane and his supporters journeyed north for the closing days of the campaign, and during June several large and lively meetings were held in the Edmonton district. The Minister of the Interior came west to "stump" for Cochrane, while Oliver had the platform support of such Liberal notables as A.L.Sifton, Dr. Lafferty and Dr. De Veber of Lethbridge. The recently formed "Young Albertans", a Liberal group, campaigned vigorously for Oliver. At a mammoth meeting held in Edmonton's Thistle Rink, the rival candidates were asked to pledge themselves on the perennial liquor question. The Bulletin reported their respective stands as follows:

Cochrane: "I can only say that I like my grog myself."
(Loud derisive cheers.)

Oliver: ". . . had only one answer he had given all his life, he had never voted against prohibition, and he never would." (8)

The main issues locally were, however, tariffs and the

(8) Edmonton Bulletin, June 11, 1896.

Manitoba separate schools question. Cochrane simply supported government policy; Oliver opposed it.

The balloting of June 23 swept the Liberals into office. Oliver's victory (9) was celebrated in Edmonton by an immense torchlight parade engineered by the "Young Albertans." During the course of a riotous evening Oliver addressed the wildly cheering mob from the balcony of the Queen's Hotel on Jasper Avenue. (10) On that June night, with its foremost citizen and most able champion elected to the House of Commons, Edmonton perhaps felt a greater confidence in the future than it had experienced in years.

Laurier at once proceeded to form his "Ministry of Talents", but delayed the appointment of a Minister of the Interior. (11) It was generally understood that he would choose a western member for the portfolio, and speculation was rife as to whom his choice would be. Clifford Sifton and Joseph Martin both of Manitoba, and Frank Oliver of Alberta were all mentioned as possibilities.

(9) Can. Parl. Comp., 1897, p. 193.

Frank Oliver L. 3647

T.B.H. Cochrane C. 2863

Number of voters 10,279

Note that Oliver was classed simply as a Liberal in this record. According to the Edmonton Bulletin, June 25, 1896, a third candidate, Simon J. Clarke of Calgary, storekeeper, received 57 votes.

(10) Edmonton Bulletin, June 25, 1896.

(11) Edmonton Bulletin, July 20, 1896. Oliver's criticism of the delay.

The Toronto News said:

It might surprise the friends of Joe Martin and startle Mr. Sifton if Mr. Laurier should select Mr. Oliver, M.P. for Alberta, for the vacant portfolio of the interior, but stranger things than this have happened. (12)

However, it was hardly to be expected that a member from a remote and relatively insignificant constituency would be called to the Cabinet, especially when that member was not a "party man", and had pledged himself to his electors as an independent. Laurier's appointment of Clifford Sifton in November met with general approval. Writing of the new Minister, Oliver said, "He has had a lifetime of Western experience; he has shown administrative ability of a high order, and the West looks to him for an active policy in the interests of the settlers." (13) The Bulletin was very critical of haphazard and unselective immigration and expressed the hope, which was to prove unfounded, that Sifton would introduce a policy of selective immigration. "Young and yet experienced, energetic yet of sound judgment, talented and still practical, (Sifton) may be confidently expected to bring about a satisfactory change." (14) As events proved, it was to be the writer of these words himself who

(12) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 21, 1896. Quoting Toronto News

(13) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 23, 1896.

(14) Ibid Editorial opinion.

made selective immigration a key policy of the Department of the Interior.

Frank Oliver, erstwhile trader and "ox-pusher" on the Battleford Trail, and pioneer publisher from the far West, was not overawed by his seat in the Commons. To use a piece of western vernacular, he "took Ottawa in his stride." Edmonton school house, Thistle Rink, Territorial Assembly or House of Commons - all were the same to him. What he had to say he said, sparing none and flattering none - straight from the shoulder and with no diminution of his pungent vocabulary. It was soon current in the eastern press, and freely circulated around the Common's corridors, that the "untamed broncho in the government corral" was a fearless fighter and a debater to be reckoned with. His frequent verbal tilts with N.F. Davin (Cons., West Assiniboia) became the delight of the House on otherwise somnolent or barren afternoons.

His maiden speech was characteristic. He began by asking the indulgence of the House for speaking at all. But Davin, "supposedly" representing the North West, had criticized the Speech from the Throne and expressed "the bitter disappointment of the Territories" that the tariffs on agricultural implements were not to be removed during the current session. Someone "really" representing the North West had to refute him. "I am here," Oliver said, "with

a majority of something like 800 votes. Davin is here by the cast of the returning officer, an official appointed by the late government. If it could be possible to have a representative in this House with less right to speak on behalf of the people of the North West, I cannot conceive of him."

(15) There was not, he informed the House, any disappointment in his constituency regarding the Speech from the Throne. Refusing to flatter the Liberals on their victory he added, "My constituency was carried not so much on the merits of the policy laid down by the leader of the present government, as on the demerits of the administration of the late government during the many years that it has governed that western country. It was a case of 'Turn the rascals out!'" (16) Now, with the "rascals" turned out, what did the West expect of the Liberals? Not, despite Davin, a revision of the tariff at a moment's notice. With the agricultural buying season nearly over, tariff revision could well wait for the next session. The tariff was an important issue. But the West was groaning under even more serious disabilities inflicted upon it by the late government. Paramount among these were land and railway policies. Relief from these grievances was what the West first looked for

(15) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 17, 1896.

(16) Ibid

from the present government. "The North West for the people and not for the monopolies - that is the policy we voted for." (17)

Did Davin think that he (Oliver) was tied to the government's apron strings because of his Liberal backing in the election? "I can tell him I am not a strong party man, and he knows it. I can tell him I am not bound to support the leader of the present government, unless his policy is in the interests of the North West." (18) In conclusion he said, speaking of Conservatives in general, "The gentlemen whose ideas of the requirements of government rise no higher than the filling of places are no men to rule this country." As for Davin in particular, "We must give all credit to the clerk of the court who did the final act of electing the hon. gentleman" (19)

This speech marked the beginning of a parliamentary feud which was to last for several years. (20)

The closing moments in the afternoon session were peaceful. The lion and the lamb (both Davin and Oliver will know which is the lion) lay down together.

And thus, with the two belligerents of the afternoon at peace, the House arose. (21)

(17) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 17, 1896.

(18) Ibid

(19) Ibid

(20) Nicholas Flood Davin died in 1901, by his own hand. Previously, he had been involved in litigation with Walter Scott, M.P., his successor as member for West Assiniboia, who had purchased from him the Leader.

(21) Toronto Telegram, April 22, 1897.

Oliver was frequently accused of spicing his attacks on the policies of his opponents with an undue measure of personal abuse. Undoubtedly he sometimes did so, but there were qualifying circumstances. Personal abuse was a political stock-in-trade in the 'eighties and 'nineties, and if some of his contemporaries indulged in it less effectively than he, it may well have been for lack of ability rather than lack of inclination. He was extraordinarily astute in analysing motives, and he had a flair for the ready phrase and the apt analogy. He had certain strong prejudices and perhaps allowed himself, upon occasion, to be carried away in defence of his principles. Where he suspected insincerity or turpitude, he was absolutely merciless; but where he sensed integrity, he was as ready as the next man to respect an opponent's opinions. (22)

True to his election pledges Oliver at once set himself wholeheartedly to pressing North West claims upon the administration. The battle for increased Territorial subsidies, in which he had been a leader in the North West Council and the Assembly, he now carried on to the floor of the House of Commons. With characteristic thoroughness he studied the innumerable government and Territorial papers

(22) For example, he respected his political opponent Dr. H.C. Wilson and refrained from extreme criticism. Despite political differences, he was a warm admirer of Judge Macleod.

bearing on the question. When he was ready to bring his demands to the attention of the House, he had at his finger tips the history of the subsidies dispute and an imposing array of figures on population, educational and public works expenditures, specific North West needs, and comparable provincial grants. (23) He was not able, of course, to effect an immediate increase in Territorial subsidies, but even the Regina Leader was constrained to credit him with a very forceful beginning.

Whether it is due to the emphasis with which Mr. Frank Oliver always seems able to present a subject, or the fact that the member for Alberta had power to impart more information at Ottawa on the question of the Dominion grant to the North West Assembly than had before been given in that quarter, there is one thing certain, viz., that the eastern newspapers are devoting space to, and evincing intelligence respecting the matter that has not before been evident. (24)

He supported Laurier's conciliatory settlement of the Manitoba separate schools dispute, and editorially commended the settlement as "a common ground upon which both could meet and by reasonable mutual concessions arrive at a working and workable basis." (25) Pointing out that the Manitoba Roman Catholics, including Archbishop Langevin himself, had supported the Conservatives' abortive remedial bill, he

(23) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 7, 1896; Sept. 10, 1896; Sept. 14, 1896.

(24) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 17, 1896. Quoting Regina Leader.

(25) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 3, 1896.

claimed that Laurier's settlement was more favorable to the religious minority than Bowell's or Tupper's proposals, and warned that any further separate schools agitation in Manitoba would be a deliberate attempt to re-open an angry sore in the body politic. (26)

In an attempt to implement the Hudson Bay Outlet scheme which he had favored for years, he piloted through the railway committee of the House a bill to incorporate a Hudson Bay Railway Company with a capital of eight million dollars.

(27)

The new government, as was to be expected after a long opposition regime, "housecleaned" the civil service, a process which led to the cry of partyism and patronage. Oliver defended the Cabinet's action as necessary to efficient administration, claiming that ". . . the people of Canada . . . voted in support of the new government quite as much for the purpose of getting a reform in the civil service as on any other grounds." (28)

The new Alberta member was very interested in federal aid to western agriculture, but he opposed Davin's motion for aid "for the purpose of establishing creameries and cheese

(26) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 3, 1896.

(27) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 28, 1896. The bill did not get through the House.

(28) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 21, 1896. "Mr. Oliver in Parliament."

factories in the North West." "I would certainly object," he said, "to a proposition that would bring the government into active competition with private capital in this business." (29) What the dairying industry needed, Oliver suggested, was aid for creameries already in operation; but even before that was practical, "more settlers and more cows." (30)

Although the railway land grants system was abandoned in 1894, the West continued to suffer for years the ill effects of the lavish government terms conceded to the railway companies. The Dominion agreement with the C.P.R. was discriminatory against the West with respect to both the land grants and tax exemptions.

The fact that the C.P.R. land grants alternated with homestead lands caused every dollar spent by the settler for improvements, whether on his own land or in taxation to the local authorities, to enhance the value of the Company's holdings in the community. "Federal purposes" not only required the Territories to furnish 86 percent of the land grants earned by the railway companies, despite the fact that only 43 percent of their mileage was constructed in the North West, but added the additional burden of what amounted to a tax upon the pioneer communities, in releasing a vast quantity of taxable property of a great corporation from taxation. (31)

A bitter dispute raged over the interpretation to be

(29) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 21, 1896.

(30) Ibid

(31) Lingard Territorial Government in Canada pp. 226-7.

placed on the phrase "free from such taxation for 20 years after the grant thereof from the Crown," in section 16 of the schedule to the C.P.R. contract, 1881, with reference to land granted to the railway. (32)

The company contended that its twenty years' exemption commenced to run only from the date when the letters patent for the land were issued by the Dominion government. The local authorities understood that the exemption expired twenty years from the date of the issue of the charter to the company, or from the date of completion of fifty-mile sections of the road, or at least from the time when the whole grant was "earned", on the construction of the railway. If the term of exemption began only on the issue of patents, and if the patents did not issue until the sale of land by the company, it appeared evident that the company would never pay taxes on an acre of its vast land holdings in the Territories. (33)

(32) "The Canadian Pacific Railway and all stations and station grounds, workshops, buildings, yards, and other property, rolling stock and appurtenances required and used for the construction and working thereof, and the capital stock of the Company shall be forever free from taxation by the Dominion, or by any Province hereafter to be established, or by any municipal corporation therein; and the lands of the Company, in the North West Territories, until they are either sold or occupied, shall also be free from such taxation for 20 years after the grant thereof from the Crown." Statutes of Canada, 44 Vict., c. l, s. 16 of the schedule (1881)

(33) Lingard, op. cit., p. 227.

A Manitoba appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada was decided in favor of the Company in 1903.

A Supreme Court report of February, 1905, declared that "the period of twenty years exemption from taxation of such lands . . . begins from the date of the actual issue of letters patent of grant from the Crown, from time to time, after they have been earned, selected, surveyed, allotted, and accepted by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company."

The North West complained that the C.P.R. and other subsidized railway companies were deliberately slow in choosing their "earned" lands, so as to evade taxation.

Of the total of 56,087,072 acres granted to all railway companies, the Department of the Interior reported, in June, 1903, that only "about 14,800,000 acres" had been patented, and of these "about 11,800,000 acres . . . since February 1901." Clearly then, the C.P.R., like the other companies enjoying land subsidies, had followed the practice of evading taxation, by refusing to select and patent its lands until it considered the time opportune to put them on the market. (34)

Oliver lost no time in calling for government action on the problem of railway tax exemption. During the first session he urged the administration to consider the case of certain railways, including the Calgary and Edmonton, which by not selecting their lands were evading school and statute labor taxation. (35) He enquired if the government was aware that the C.P.R. was holding in reserve the right of selection of public lands on account of grant, enabling them to block land grants in the Territories to other railway companies, and he urged that the C.P.R. be compelled to choose its land immediately. (36) He moved a resolution calling on the government to issue C.P.R. patents at once, so that in at least twenty years the Company would have to

(34) Lingard, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-9.

(35) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 21, 1896. "Mr. Oliver in Parliament".

(36) *Ibid*

pay its taxes. (37)

The Regina Standard was among the western newspapers commanding his vigorous attack on this perennial North West grievance, stating, "With characteristic perseverance he has apparently gone to the very root of it." (38) Oliver's campaign met with no immediate success, but he found a staunch ally in R. L. Richardson, member for Lisgar and proprietor of the Winnipeg Tribune, and the two men directed a minority fight against railway tax exemption for several years.

Meanwhile he attacked another angle of the railway problem, that of branch lines and townsites. On several occasions, with short or branch lines under discussion in the railway committee or in the House, he urged that lines be required, as a condition of their charter, to pass through already established settlements so as to minimize "behind the scenes" speculation in townsites. (39)

He charged that certain North West railways, which did not enjoy tax exemption by act of Parliament, actually were exempted by a secret understanding between the companies

(37) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 28, 1896. Quoting the Winnipeg Tribune.

(38) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 1, 1896. Quoting the Regina Standard.

(39) Edmonton Bulletin, May 24, 1897 - Re the Calgary and Edmonton and the town of Macleod; June 19, 1899 - Re the Edmonton and Saskatchewan line and the town of Fort Saskatchewan.

and the government, greatly to the prejudice of the settlers. On these grounds, during the second session, he moved a resolution asking that the lands of the Calgary and Edmonton, the Regina and Prince Albert, and the Manitoba and North Western railways be made subject to taxation forthwith. (40)

In his insistent "sniping" at the railways, Oliver declared that they were a national and not merely a western question, and placed particular stress upon Canada's proximity to the more advanced manufacturing interests of the United States. (41) He was a vigorous advocate of a Canadian railway commission to co-ordinate and supervise the national railway structure. (42)

The fight which Oliver and Richardson conducted against western railway abuses was a long and bitter one. In May, 1900, the Toronto Telegram stated that so far the two men had been baffled, and that one main reason for their defeat was the existence of the Winnipeg Free Press and the Regina Leader, "which are ever ready to whitewash schemes to betray the people and benefit the C.P.R." The Telegram continued, "Western Canada has been betrayed since the

(40) Edmonton Bulletin, June 17, 1897. Session reports.

(41) Edmonton Bulletin, June 1, 1899.

(42) Edmonton Bulletin, May 29, 1899. A railway commission is advocated in many subsequent issues of the Bulletin.

Liberals came into power with the full approval of these two Vicars of Bray. All that the West gets will be due to the earnestness of representatives like R.L. Richardson and Frank Oliver who will fight for principle regardless of party.* (43)

During the session of 1900 Richardson and Oliver, contending that the C.P.R. land tax exemption extended twenty years from the issue of the charter, introduced a motion that all lands earned by the C.P.R. should be patented to them by February 16, 1901, so that they might be subject to taxation from that date. In seconding the motion Oliver stated that ". . . the land should be patented so that exemption would terminate whenever the law would permit." (44) Laurier himself spoke against the motion, which was lost 99 to 6. Said the Bulletin report, "The North West got the worst throw down of the session yesterday There could be no more complete exhibition of the abject servility of both parties to the interests of the C.P.R." (45)

During the 'nineties the potential wealth of the Kootenay area in Southern British Columbia was revealed, and the need for a Crow's Nest Pass railway to tap this region was widely recognized. Oliver was very favorable to the railway,

(43) Edmonton Bulletin, May 14, 1900. Quoting the Toronto Telegram.

(44) Edmonton Bulletin, July 6, 1900. Session report.

(45) Ibid Report from Oliver.

but not to the application of the C.P.R. for a Crow's Nest line charter. "Unless the Crow's Nest Pass road is built and operated under government control so as to ensure active competition it might almost as well never be built as far as the business interests of Eastern Canada are concerned."

(46)

The C.P.R. secured the right to build the Crow's Nest line under the charter of the British Columbia Southern Railway, but this right was qualified by an agreement signed in 1897 to reduce rates west-bound on certain commodities from Fort William and points west of Fort William. This, said Oliver, was not what the West wanted; but that, "The Government should build and own the Crow's Nest Pass Railway, and either operate it or lease running powers on it."

(47) In March, 1897, referring to the "thunderous silence" with which the Winnipeg papers greeted "the recent reduction on C.P.R. freight rates between Alberta and the Kootenay," the Bulletin claimed, "Whatever was done by any newspaper to secure the lowering of these rates was done by the Bulletin and by the Bulletin only." (48)

Both in the Bulletin and in the House, Oliver made his

(46) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 30, 1896.

(47) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 31, 1896. Oliver on the occasion of a Christmas night banquet in Calgary, attended by the Hon. A.G. Blair, Minister of Railways.

(48) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 4, 1897.

stand perfectly clear.

Mr. Oliver supported the construction of the road; but claimed that greater benefits would have resulted from construction under government control than under C.P.R. control, inasmuch as government construction would have meant the breaking of railway monopoly in the North West, while C.P.R. construction meant the perpetuation of that monopoly. (49)

As for the concessions in freight rates which the C.P.R. was willing to pay "for a continuation of its monopoly", "Under this arrangement the North West settler is the decoy of the C.P.R.; . . . the Company is to squeeze him until he squeals loud enough to compel the government to come to his assistance, and then the C.P.R. will demand the price of relaxing the freight rate screw, either in the purchase of its lands or in aid to additional branches to still further strengthen its monopoly." (50)

Despite Oliver's persistent and vigorous campaign as a "reform" member of Parliament, there were, naturally, many North West concessions he failed to obtain, and many North West abuses that went unrectified. The Conservative press in Alberta delighted to twit him about these "unfulfilled promises", and mentioned continued C.P.R. monopoly in the Crow's Nest deal, the continued immigration of "Galician

(49) Edmonton Bulletin, June 28, 1897. Session report.

(50) Edmonton Bulletin, July 5, 1897.
See also Edmonton Bulletin, July 1, 1897.

capitalists", and failure to get the Saskatchewan River bridge. The Bulletin replied in kind. In answer to a Calgary Herald jibe concerning the bridge, Oliver retorted that at least present action on the project was "like greased lightning compared with when the Herald's friends were in office, and that estimable journal had its late lamented cinch on the Pap." (51)

Oliver was concerned regarding the vast tracts of North West land, which, being reserved in various ways, were still closed to the homesteader. He denied Davin's claim that most of the land formerly belonging to the colonization companies had reverted to the Crown. Citing the case of the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land Co., he charged that it had held the land for a number of years and had done everything to discourage settlement. Then when the charter was cancelled it received land at the rate of one dollar per acre for the amount it had paid in, plus the amount it had put into improvements. The Company, he added, was still holding a good deal of land for a rise in land values, a situation which was duplicated in many places throughout the West. Was it not time for the government to do something about it? (52)

(51) Edmonton Bulletin, July 26, 1897.

(52) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 8, 1896.

With about 20 out of 36 sections in every township in the Territories reserved to railway land grants alone, it was, he maintained, nothing short of stupid to think that the government's immigration policy could be really effective. He advocated immigration, not from Europe or the United States, but from the Eastern Canadian provinces, "to bind Canada together"; but he stressed the "fallacy of hoping to encourage immigration by opening up only alternate sections."

(53) His remedy for the continued land-lock was simple enough: "All the lands held reserved and remaining in the hands of the Crown should be thrown open for settlement forth with, i.e., the so-called school lands and the odd-numbered sections throughout the country yet remaining in the government's hands." (54, To the suggestion that the government buy back alienated lands and throw them open for sale to actual settlers at low cost, Oliver was opposed.

"The Bulletin will not support a proposition to buy back one acre - of railway land for instance - as long as one acre of public land is held reserved." (55) But should the day come when no more public land was held in reserve, it might be practicable to purchase or reclaim previously alienated

(53) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 26, 1896.

(54) Ibid

(55) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 9, 1896.

land and sell it to settlers, to establish a fund to build competing railways. (56)

Sifton's policy of mass immigration had not as yet borne full fruit, but already there had been an influx of Central Europeans sufficiently large to alarm Oliver and move him to sound a note of warning. He did not agree with Sifton that "peasants in sheep-skin coats" made desirable settlers, and referring to Ruthenian immigration he wrote, "That they are not the most desirable immigrants is made evident by a glance and is still further established by recent experiences. . . . they are just the same servile, shiftless people with money as without it They are not people that are wanted in this country at any price." (57) That was in 1896. Two years later, with the rising tide of Central Europeans pouring into the North West, Oliver denounced Sifton's "unselective immigration" on the floor of the House. He referred particularly to the Galicians as "pauper immigrants" who, constituting a surplus of cheap farm labor, tended to depress the living standards of the North West settlers. The average immigrant needed, he maintained, seasonal work to help him get established, and immigrants of British extraction simply could not compete at

(56) The principle of land sales to build a competing railway appears in Oliver's land bill of 1908.

(57) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 14, 1896.

the wage levels accepted by the Galicians. (58)

A rather amusing incident of the following year threw light, not only on Oliver's reaction to the Galicians, but on his growing antagonism to the Winnipeg Free Press which he identified closely with the interests of the C.P.R. and "cheap" immigration. In a certain Bulletin article he made passing reference to "the Galician editor of the Free Press." The Free Press editor was quick to point out that he was not a Galician, and to demand a retraction. Oliver, instead of apologizing, took him to task for being obtuse. The term "Galician editor", he painstakingly explained, referred neither to the Free Press editor, nor to his nationality. It did refer to whichever editor on the "Press" was responsible for that department devoted to the interests of the Galicians.

As, for instance, when the words "live-stock editor" are used, they do not mean that the editor is a horse, mule, ass, one of the neat cattle or swine, however closely he may resemble one or other of these valuable animals in temperament, appearance or mental capacity.

The Bulletin had no intention of insulting what remnants of manhood and respectability unnumbered years of serfdom have left in the Galicians by insinuating that any one of their nationality was capable of taking part in editing the Free Press - a paper which it would be fulsome adulation to call a journalistic prostitute. (59)

(58) Edmonton Bulletin, June 13, 1898. Session report.

(59) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 26, 1899.

Speaking in the Commons on a vote of \$100,000 for the salaries of immigration officials, Oliver questioned the whole philosophy underlying Sifton's policy and made a plea for selective immigration. He disputed the validity of measuring the success of a policy simply by counting the number of immigrants brought in each year. The North West settlers were, he warned, and the whole country should be, interested in the kind of immigrants being brought in. Immigration must be encouraged, "not simply to produce railway traffic . . . but for the purpose of building up a kindred, and higher, and better civilization in the country." If the government continued to put "the wrong kind of settlers" in the North West, nothing but irreparable harm could result. (60)

While Oliver was agitating in the House of Commons for selective immigration, the Bulletin was conducting an ambitious campaign to attract "the right kind of immigrant" into "the land of golden opportunity". (61) This campaign reached a peak during the summer of 1900, when issue after issue was devoted to "boosting" the country, advising and encouraging the prospective settler, and singing the praises of Edmonton - "The Northern Metropolis".

(60) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 2, 1899. Session report.

(61) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 3, 1900. Bulletin Supplement: The Edmonton Mercantile Review.

Edmonton's claim to this ambitious title had indeed been strengthened by events of the previous three years. The first significant news item on the impending gold rush to the Yukon appeared in the Bulletin of July 29, 1897. In refutation of certain eastern press opinions that the Yukon was over-estimated and should not and need not be developed, the paper contained this interesting statement: "If gold is flowing from the Yukon, our business is not to stop the flow, but to cause it to flow our way. We need it, and can get it."

Most of the traffic to the Yukon went north by water from the west coast ports. But as the gold fever mounted in the East and in the United States, Edmonton saw the opportunity to assert herself as the key point in an All-Canadian Overland Route to the new Eldorado. During the succeeding months the town did become an outfitting depot and "jumping-off place" for the Yukon-bound adventurer, and business boomed as never before. The most fantastic claims were made for the feasibility of the land route north west from Edmonton into the Yukon. Many individuals and parties did set forth from Edmonton toward the promised land. Some reached it; many did not. The overland route, except for the hardiest and most experienced traveller, was fraught with extreme danger and difficulty.

The Bulletin, of course, fostered the Yukon boom and devoted columns and pages to advocating the Canadian overland route. Suggestions ranged from "a good pack and cattle trail" to a standard-built railway from Edmonton to the Yukon. (62) The paper ran an endless series of Yukon reports, maps of alternative routes, and articles of information to the prospective gold-seeker. With amazing facility, in outfitter's stores and on the street corners, Edmontonians built railways throughout the north and floated steamships on the Athabasca, the Peace, the Mackenzie, the Liard, and on the Yukon River itself. Frank Oliver mentioned, with reference to a certain matter that had temporarily escaped his attention, that he had been too busy "building railways to the Yukon." He took the platform on numerous occasions in defence of the Edmonton Overland Route. (63)

The "Yukon fever" eventually burned itself out. But while it lasted the Bulletin was largely instrumental in "putting Edmonton on the map", as copies of the paper, with plenty of immigration propaganda included, found their way to Eastern Canada, the United States, the British Isles, Europe and places even more distant. (64)

(62) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 4, 1897. Issues of the Bulletin throughout the years 1897, 1898 and 1899 contain frequent references to the route.

(63) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 18, 1897; Dec. 16, 1897.

(64) Bulletin publicity and correspondence, 1897-1900.

The All-Canadian Overland Route did not materialize. Mackenzie and Mann applied for a charter for the Canadian Yukon Railway Co., which proposed to link the head of ocean navigation on the west coast with the interior of the Yukon by rail. Oliver consistently opposed the Yukon Railway bill in the House debates, urging that the terms offered Mackenzie and Mann would actually check Yukon development, that the line would benefit the United States more than it would Canada, that resources of the North West Territories east of the mountains would be used to build a railway west of the mountains from which the North West would receive no benefit, and that money and lands spent on such a Yukon railway would prevent the opening up of direct communication by the Edmonton overland route. (65)

Oliver continued to advocate temperance, and devoted himself to supporting the prohibitionist forces in the Dominion liquor plebiscite of 1898. When the "dry" forces won by a relatively narrow margin, he expressed gratification, but at a temperance meeting at McDougall Methodist Church in Edmonton in November, 1898, he stated, "Although prohibition has achieved a victory at the polls, the fight is beginning rather than ending." (66) It was already becoming

(65) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 10, 1898; Mar. 24, 1898; Mar. 31, 1898. The bill was defeated in the Senate.

(66) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 7, 1898.

evident that the Dominion would not attempt to enforce a prohibition policy supported by such a narrow majority as that revealed by the plebiscite. Oliver's suggested solution, the one he had advocated for years, was to amend the constitution to bring the liquor traffic under the control of the provinces. (67) In the House of Commons, debating a resolution favoring Dominion legislation to provide for prohibition in one or more of the provinces, he urged that "this parliament should be a party to an amendment to the constitution that would place the whole control (of liquor) in the hands of the provinces." (68)

During his first term as federal member Oliver devoted himself in various ways to the immediate interests of his constituents. Early in 1897, for instance, he toured Alberta with Professor Robertson, Federal Agriculture and Dairy Commissioner, who was in the West to implement aid to creameries. Oliver played a prominent part in Robertson's meetings with the farmers, explaining the plan of government assistance to put "going creameries" on their feet. (69)

At its annual meeting in 1897, the Edmonton Board of Trade, of which Oliver had long been an active member, moved a vote of thanks to Alberta's M.P. for his untiring efforts

(67) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 10, 1898.

(68) Edmonton Bulletin, May 7, 1900.

(69) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 15, 1897.

on behalf of the Edmonton District. "We most cordially thank our member, Mr. Oliver, for the valuable assistance he has given this board by laying before the government the public wants as conveyed to him by your Council" (70)

Soon after his arrival in Ottawa in 1896, Oliver tackled the problem of the Saskatchewan River Bridge, and the Bulletin reported his negotiations with the Hon. Israel Tarte, Minister of Public Works, in an attempt to have work on the structure commenced during the winter. (71) Although Edmonton tentatively voted a contribution of \$50,000 to the project, a long struggle still lay ahead. (72) In the spring of 1897 Oliver wrote to the Edmonton Council, outlining certain conditions which would have to be met before further action could be expected. The Council, irritated by the delay and desperate to see the bridge a reality, held a special meeting and wired Oliver as follows:

Council authorizes you to offer the government \$25,000 towards immediate construction of combined railway and traffic bridge. Citizens, to avoid further delay, have raised the cash and marked cheque for the above amount mailed Tarte today. Cheque to be replaced by town debenture when issued. Council passed by-law on Saturday. Have Tarte wire acceptance of offer and promise of immediate construction. (73)

(70) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 22, 1897. For Oliver's record as member of the Edmonton Board of Trade, see Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 12, 1900, "History of the Board of Trade."

(71) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 24, 1896.

(72) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 26, 1896.

(73) Edmonton Bulletin, April 12, 1897.

This communication affords an interesting sidelight on pioneer public financing. Whether its fine note of urgency had any real effect on the Department of Public Works is uncertain. At any rate in July the Bulletin was happy to announce that the government was calling for tenders for the bridge abutments. Further delays developed, however, and it was not until more than a year later that the following telegram was received in Edmonton:

Ottawa, Dec. 22, 1898.

To Frank Oliver, M.P.

Arrangements for bridge completed today.

J.I. Tarte. (74)

Completing arrangements and building a bridge were, nevertheless, still two different matters. Four more years were to elapse before the first train pulled across the Saskatchewan bridge, finally linking Edmonton by rail to the western transportation system. Government action on the bridge was dilatory enough, but had it not been for Frank Oliver's untiring efforts in Ottawa, Edmonton might well have had to wait even more long years for the completion of this much-needed public work.

Upon his return home from the session of 1898, Oliver was welcomed by a demonstration of public confidence unparalleled in the political annals of Edmonton. This

demonstration took the form of a mass meeting, banquet, complimentary addresses and tributes in the press. Making due allowance for the organized Liberal influence behind the welcome, it would appear that all shades of political opinion joined in paying tribute to a member who had indeed kept his pledge to be first and foremost "a North West man", standing four-square and vigilant in the fight for Territorial rights.

At a great outdoor gathering at the Edmonton race track, representatives of South Edmonton, (75) Edmonton and St. Albert read addresses lauding his work.

A.C. Rutherford, (76) president of the South Edmonton Liberal Association, read the address from the South Side constituents commanding Oliver for having done his duty during his term in the House. The address emphasized approval of his stand on the Stikine-Teslin Lake railway bill, railway monopoly and immigration. Referring to his battle for the All-Canadian Route it stated:

You have done more than anyone else in placing before the House and the country the benefit and advantage to Canada of having the route indicated made more easy for traffic.

We feel we have in you a representative who will express our views honestly, fearlessly and ably . . . (77)

(75) The terms "South Edmonton" and "South Side" were current in referring to Strathcona.

(76) Later to become Alberta's first premier.

(77) Edmonton Bulletin, June 27, 1898.

The St. Albert address, delivered by F. Prince, Conservative and former M.L.A., stressed the work Oliver had done for the protection of Northern Alberta and the agricultural interests of the Upper Saskatchewan settlements:

By your talents, your work, your tact and the courage of your opinion, you have attained a point which is rarely seen in any electoral division of the Dominion. Because, although retaining the full confidence of the liberals, you have also convinced the conservatives that you are the worthy son of Alberta.

We are now, irrespective of political parties, bringing you the congratulations of the agricultural settlements (78)

W. Johnstone Walker, prominent in the Board of Trade, delivered Edmonton's congratulatory message praising the able manner in which Oliver had represented the interests of the North West, and the marked ability he had shown in the House debates on the Teslin Lake railway bill, the Crow's Nest Pass railway, and the question of C.P.R. tax exemptions and monopoly. Commending him for his activities on behalf of the North West carried on outside the House, the message stated:

The able addresses delivered by you during the winter to the boards of trade and at other meetings in the leading cities of the Dominion have in no small measure already resulted in advancing the best interests of the North West. (79)

The race track meeting and the elaborate banquet which

(78) Edmonton Bulletin, June 27, 1898.

(79) Ibid

followed in the evening revealed a remarkable degree of unanimity in acclaiming Oliver as a true "independent", whose personal integrity and undoubted political talents well fitted him to represent the diverse interests of his constituents. Replying to these enthusiastic expressions of appreciation, he reiterated his faith in the North West, dealt with the need of expanding markets into the Kootenay and the Yukon, outlined steps taken toward the construction of a trunk road into the Peace River Country, and pledged himself to continue his efforts on behalf of a federal investigation into the mineral and other resources of the Athabasca and Mackenzie River areas. (80)

Conservative opinion in the south was well summed up the following spring by the Calgary Herald (Cons.) in its editorial on a speech delivered by Oliver during a stop-over in the southern town while en route to attend the Parliamentary session of 1899:

The speech of Frank Oliver, M.P., before the large meeting of citizens in the Calgary opera house was characterized by the deliberation, lucidity and independence for which the member for Alberta is noted. The Herald is not disposed to be critical toward Mr. Oliver. He has a difficult position to fill and he is filling it to the best of his judgment and the best of his ability. His remarks on his relations towards his party and his constituents were decidedly good. He represents interests a hundred times more important than those represented by the average Eastern member.

The general disposition (of his constituents) is rather to help than to hinder, except perhaps on the part of the particular element interested in securing individual favors, and in regard to these Mr. Oliver has the sympathy and endorsement of the public in his declared determination to keep clear of the spoilsman (81)

Between parliamentary sessions Oliver devoted an increasing proportion of his time to a detailed and exhaustive study of national and Territorial issues. He became noted for the thoroughness of his preparation for debate, and when he stood up in the House he was sure to be armed with an imposing array of facts and figures with which to confound the opposition. He was a tireless traveller, making frequent tours through the West and in particular keeping in close touch personally with his constituents. No constituency interest was too small to enlist his time and energy, and he was ready to speak whenever and wherever an audience were gathered to hear him. In the summer of 1898 the increasing pressure of public business forced him to relinquish the sole proprietorship of the Edmonton Bulletin. The six-page paper, published twice a week, passed under the control of the Bulletin Co. (Ltd.). Oliver was a man who looked to the future rather than to the past, and no sentimental reminiscing accompanied the transfer. Notice of change in ownership appeared in the issue of August 15,

(81) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 16, 1899. Quoting the Calgary Herald.

1898, followed by the simple statement, "The system and principles which have been followed under the late management will be continued." With the formation of the Bulletin Co. (Ltd.), Oliver did not sever his connection with the paper he had founded. He retained a financial interest in the Company, and as a matter of fact continued to dominate the Bulletin's outlook and policies for years to come. (82) He finally disposed of his interest in 1923. (83)

The Government approached the general elections of 1900 with the utmost confidence. Coincident with the Liberal regime of 1896-1900, the long depression drew to an end and the tide set toward better times. Actually, the recovery was world-wide, and due in no small measure to the rise in prices caused by gold discoveries in South Africa and the Yukon. But it is hardly to be expected that a political party would attribute to international conditions improvements which it might credit to itself. Of the happy coincidence of Liberalism and returning prosperity the party made valuable political capital. The administration pointed with pride to its preferential tariffs, railway and land policies, and success in the field of immigration. (84) To

(82) Edmonton Bulletin, July 14, 1930.

(83) Edmonton Bulletin, April 1, 1933.
Edmonton Journal, April 1, 1933.

(84) Liberal success in immigration was largely due to the exhaustion of free public lands in the United States whither many immigrants had previously been going.

complete the discomfiture of its enemies, while Laurier continued to grow in stature and popularity as a national leader, no second Macdonald had emerged from the Conservative ranks.

Frank Oliver, assured of continued Liberal backing, launched his campaign for re-election during August, 1900, at a mass meeting in Edmonton. Not being a party man, he did not feel obliged to claim that the Liberals had made the prevailing prosperity. He did, however, assert that they had helped. He expressed approval of the government's tariff policy, the discontinuance of railway land grants and the impending Canadian Northern Railway scheme. Admitting regret that railway monopoly still existed, he maintained that some alleviation had been effected, for instance, in the reduction of western C.P.R. freight rates. While not in favor of lavish government spending, he could not be too critical as the West had profited greatly by increased federal expenditures. Territorial subsidies had nearly doubled since the Liberals took office, and sums more generous than ever granted by the Conservatives had been advanced for creamery grants, public works and more efficient North West administration. In conclusion he claimed to have maintained his position as an independent, upholding western interests first and foremost. (85)

In preparation for the campaign a Calgary Liberal convention created a Liberal Executive for Alberta with A.L. Sifton as president and C.A. Stuart as secretary. The convention, unanimously agreeing that "Oliver would put the West before private interests," (86, nominated him for re-election. (87) In moving the nomination De Veber, the Lethbridge delegate said, "While independent, Mr. Oliver could always be depended upon to do what he thought was in the best interests of the country." (88)

The Conservatives nominated Richard B. Bennett, a rising young Calgary lawyer who, years later in the "hungry 'thirties", was to become Prime Minister of Canada. Commenting on the rival candidates the editor of the Olds Oracle wrote:

Honest Frank is a favorite throughout the constituency and by his businesslike and logical reasonings linked with his irreproachable career in parliament will make matters extremely interesting for the young orator. (89)

Recalling the old days when D.W. Davis had invaded the North in the interests of the Conservatives, Oliver

(86) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 31, 1900. Quoting the Calgary Albertan.

(87) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 24, 1900.

(88) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 31, 1900. Quoting the Calgary Albertan.

(89) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 1, 1900. Quoting the Olds Oracle.

campaigned extensively in the South, speaking at numerous political rallies in the towns centring on Calgary. (90) In Calgary he declared, "If there is anything that would give me pride and pleasure in having represented a Canadian constituency in a Canadian parliament, it would be to represent it during such an era of progress and prosperity."

(91) Going on to express approbation of the government's policies and record, he made one notable exception. While approving of Sifton's vigorous policy of settling the West, he did not agree with the principle of indiscriminate immigration. The Doukhobors and Galicians, he maintained, were a liability rather than an asset to the country. (92)

R.B. Bennett charged that Oliver was "too independent" - so independent, in fact, that he would have the ear of neither the government nor the opposition, and would be unable to get anything for his constituency. This charge roused the Alberta Plaindealer (South Edmonton) to come to Oliver's defence. In an article headed "Mr. Oliver's Independence" the editor listed those issues upon which the Alberta member had fought a good fight for the North West:

Oliver fought the Yukon Railway bill and championed the All-Canadian Route.

(90) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 5, 1900.

(91) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 8, 1900.

(92) Ibid

He fought for government ownership of the Crow's Nest Railway.

He fought, with five others, both parties on the C.P.R. tax exemptions.

He insisted in parliament that the government take action to ensure that the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Railway touch at Strathcona and Fort Saskatchewan.

He tried to get soldiers medals and scrip for the Edmonton District Volunteers of the Rebellion of 1885.

When the tariff was up for revision, he fought for the interests of his constituents in urging tariff reduction on agricultural necessities.

When the Kettle River and Rainy River Railway projects were before the House he fought for competition.

When the immigration department was bonusing the steamship agents in Europe to get Galicians to come to Northern Alberta by thousands, Oliver agitated the matter in the House and in the Committee until he secured satisfaction and the obnoxious bonusing system was discontinued. (93)

"If," the Plaindealer continued, "the petty appropriations for the benefit of this town or that town cannot be secured without abandoning these greater rights which Mr. Oliver advocated, we say let the petty appropriations go."

(94) However, the Plaindealer insisted that Bennett's assumption was wrong - that a non-party man who fought for North West rights could get nothing for his constituents. Oliver had not "pulled" anything for his constituents in the sense of lobbying, but he had brought to the attention

(93) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 15, 1900. Quoting the Alberta Plaindealer. These claims are certainly borne out by Oliver's record in the House.

For Oliver's stand on the Kettle River and Rainy River Railway projects, see Edmonton Bulletin, April 7, 1898; April 14, 1898.

(94) Ibid

of the government, and by his energy and aggressiveness had helped to secure the Saskatchewan River bridge, action on local half-breed scrip, funds for geological expeditions to Yellowhead and Peace River, geological survey of Great Slave Lake (in conjunction with the Edmonton Board of Trade), a Northern mail service, assistance for the development of irrigation in Southern Alberta, aid to creameries and cold-storage plants, and many public buildings including a courthouse and jail. "Every part of the country," the editor concluded, "has been remembered; his independence has not interfered with his usefulness. Yet he is not blowing around the country about his accomplishments." (95)

Federal party lines were by this time becoming much more clearly drawn in the West. The Liberals, stimulated by four years in office, were stronger and better organized than ever before. The Conservatives, with a young and aggressive candidate in the field, were prepared to make a fighting bid for the constituency. The Calgary Herald, which had supported Oliver during his term in the House, came out strongly for Bennett. The Calgary Albertan (Lib.) backed Oliver, citing his accurate knowledge of the West's needs and business problems, and his determination to fight

(95) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 15, 1900. Quoting the Alberta Plaindealer.

the people's battles with steadiness and truth. (96)

Despite Oliver's protestations of independence many Liberals and practically all "party" Conservatives now labelled him simply as a Liberal. His own statement of his stand should bear some weight:

If returned I go to parliament to represent western interests and not party interests.

It is as an independent member I am now asking your support.

I will work for the interests of the North West irrespective of party. (97)

During the campaign Oliver and Bennett several times appeared on the same platform. (98) Oliver was a ready "rough and tumble" debater and more than held his own. Bennett, who talked "solid conservative", did not, by his rather aloof manner and rhetorical utterance, arouse much enthusiasm in his frontier audience. Oliver spoke his constituents' language; Bennett did not.

The Conservatives put up a stiff fight, but in the election of November 7 Oliver was re-elected by a majority of over a thousand, (99) "in spite of every false and belittling thing which an extremely partizan press could trump up

(96) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 19, 1900. Quoting the Calgary Albertan.

(97) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 5, 1900.

(98) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 28, 1900.

(99) The Canadian Parliamentary Guide Ottawa 1901 p. 129. Hereafter referred to as Can. Parl. Guide, with year of issue indicated.

against him." (100) Two days after the election the Calgary Herald quoted Bennett as explaining his defeat as follows:

Mr. Oliver's friends urged on every voter that if Mr. Oliver was defeated it was goodbye to Edmonton's chances for being the capital of the future province.

The cry raised in the North against the South, the work done by the government officials among the Galicians and other foreign settlers, the work of the scrip commissioners among the half-breeds, the free use of money . . . , all contributed to the Liberal victory. (101)

Oliver, who at this time regarded Bennett as a personable enough young man despite his political "aberrations", simply replied to the charge: "It is to be hoped that Mr. Bennett, though defeated, retains sufficient honor and honesty to not assume responsibility for the statements credited to him." (102)

Accusations of influencing the foreign vote became increasingly common from this time on. Each party charged the other with a high degree of skill in "swinging" the foreign element by means of misleading promises, threats and bribery. The Conservatives, now on the outside, became quite bitter on the iniquities of the "Liberal machine", and the

(100) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 12, 1900. Election results.

(101) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 16, 1900. Quoting the Calgary Herald.

(102) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 16, 1900. On the occasion, several years earlier, of Bennett's election to the N.W. Assembly, Oliver wrote: "A temperance man in principle and practice, (he) will no doubt be an acquisition to the House."

term "Oliver's Galicians" became current in Conservative campaign vocabulary. Certain Conservatives, following their defeat, described the Galicians as sheep swayed by the Liberals. In reply to this belittling characterization, a certain Galician, either better versed in English than his fellow-countrymen, or else with the aid of an interpreter, wrote to a small Edmonton news-sheet as follows:

Before the election when canvassed for our votes we were called gentlemen by the party which now calls us sheep. The same party also brought a large quantity of liquor to help influence our votes. We drank the liquor and then voted - for Mr. Oliver. (103)

In the House of Commons Oliver returned to the attack on railway monopoly. During the session of 1901 he spoke in favor of the appointment of a railway commission with judicial power to fix rates, regulate matters of railway operation and management, and settle disputes over railway service. (104) He again came into conflict with the Prime Minister on the question of C.P.R. tax exemptions. On March 7, 1901, Richardson moved second reading of a bill to fix expiration of exemption from tax on the railway lands at February 15, 1901. Oliver supported the bill in a reasoned and powerful speech. Laurier, however, moved a six month's

(103) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 23, 1900. Quoting a letter in the Edmonton Post from a correspondent at Star, a small Galician settlement north east of Edmonton.

(104) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 18, 1901.

hoist and the bill was defeated, only eight members voting for it. (105) Nothing daunted, Richardson and Oliver appealed to the House to submit the exemptions question to the courts. On May 17 Richardson moved and Oliver seconded, "That the government make the contention before the courts that the exemption period contemplated in the contract begin when the contract granting the subsidies, both in cash and lands, was ratified by parliament." (106) The motion was defeated, but the battle continued throughout the following sessions, and there is little doubt that the constant pressure exerted by Oliver and Richardson with a handful of supporters did something to force the C.P.R. exemptions problem into the courts.

In 1902 the Calgary and Edmonton Railway applied for renewal of its charter and permission to build branch lines. Oliver opposed the C. & E. bill as introduced in the railway committee of which he was a member. He urged that the bill provide certain safeguards in the public interest. There should not be, he submitted, any revival of land grants for branch lines, and there should be a guarantee of early construction and the protection of certain established interests such as townsites. The committee concurred in his views and refused to pass the bill as presented. The

(105) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 25, 1901.

(106) Edmonton Bulletin, May 31, 1901.

Company did not satisfactorily amend its proposed bill during the session and the question was carried over. (107) That the final C. & E. bill did contain special provisions protecting the public interest was a measure of Oliver's success in helping to put teeth in the railway committee.

Oliver had long been a staunch advocate of government ownership of railways. He even advocated the government purchase of certain railways at an arbitrated price and their operation as government lines. "Here in the West," he stated in 1903, "we all believe in the principle of government ownership of railways, but unfortunately it is not so all over the country at present." (108) Recognizing, therefore, that the government would neither buy nor build lines which the West badly needed, he conceded the necessity of private ownership hedged in by every public safeguard which the government could effect. Considering that freight rates were in the long run the most important factor in the railway problem, he was in favor of government subsidies for the construction of lines in return for control of freight rates.

During the debates on the Canadian Northern Railway proposals in the Commons in 1903, he said, referring to the

(107) Edmonton Bulletin, May 12, 1902.

(108) Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 23, 1903.

North West viewpoint:

As far as the people there are concerned they will look with very great dissatisfaction upon the fact of large government assistance being given to a railway unless satisfactory provision is made for definite maximum rates along the railway so aided, so that it will be apparent to the country at large that value in rates is secured for the aid given. (109)

Further emphasis on freight rates as the prime consideration in railway deals appeared in his speech in the C.N.R. bond debate of June, 1903. (110)

By the autumn of 1903 Oliver was becoming convinced that the fight against railway monopoly was nearly won. The railway commission bill was not yet passed, but "the adoption of the principle of the railway commission bill has changed the position between the people and the railways throughout the whole of Canada. For the first time the railways have been effectively organized as the servants and not the masters of the people. Twenty and thirty years ago the Canadian transportation question was political rather than commercial, but today it is commercial rather than political." (111) This optimism was inspired, not only by the government's increasingly favorable attitude toward the

(109) Edmonton Bulletin, June 19, 1903.

(110) Edmonton Bulletin, June 22, 1903. Session report. "The question of rates was more important than that of the method or amount of aid given or even of the security taken."

(111) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 31, 1903. "The Parliament of 1903." These parliamentary reports to the Bulletin were written by Oliver himself.

establishment of a railway commission, but by his confidence that the terms of the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific charters would safeguard all vital public interests including the fixing of rates. "In the G.T.P. and the C.N.R.," he said, "the Saskatchewan Valley receives at a single stroke railway development and railway competition subject to government control of rates." (112)

Oliver regarded free trade as an ideal in commercial regulations, but conceded its impracticability as a Canadian policy. He advocated a tariff for revenue in support of the Liberal policy, but was concerned lest the pressure exerted by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association should cause a reversal of the government's moderate tariff reductions. In 1902 the feeling was prevalent that the party might be in favor of increased protection to be implemented at the next session. In the budget debate Oliver became involved in an argument with an opposition member on the word "protectionist", and objected to its being used only in the narrow sense of "high tariff". He said:

I am a protectionist, but possibly what he calls protection I would call robbery. When I speak of protection, I speak of protection to the general interests of the country.

I believe in the policy of protection. I believe it is the first business of a government to do what lies in its power by legislation, administration or

otherwise to protect and advance the interests of the people of the country of which it has charge. I want to see a protectionist policy on behalf of labor in this country. I want to see a policy that will protect labor against the degradation of unfair competition

If we allow the right kind of people to be displaced by the wrong kind of people we do ourselves an injury. (113)

During the session of 1903 Oliver was among the few, including Laurier and the Minister of Finance, who spoke against increased protection. Most of the members, even including the Liberals, either avoided the subject or defended a return toward upward revision of the tariffs. (114) Oliver objected in particular to any increase in iron duties which would be reflected in a higher price for agricultural implements. (115) He was happy to report from Ottawa at the end of the session that despite the pressure of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the opposition, "From beginning to end the tariff today stands as it did a year ago." (116)

The years 1901 and 1902 witnessed the western grain blockade and the Western Standards Board scandal. Oliver had already defended the right of the government to claim certain

(113) Edmonton Bulletin, April 4, 1902. Session report. A direct reference to Chinese labor in British Columbia, and a slap at the Galicians.

(114) Edmonton Bulletin, May 8, 1903.

(115) Edmonton Bulletin, June 19, 1903.

(116) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 24, 1903.

sections of railroad right of way for the erection of flat warehouses for the handling of grain. He opposed the "monopoly" of the elevator companies and branded them as middlemen whose services could very well be dispensed with. In 1900 the government introduced a bill to regulate the grain trade which permitted the erection of flat warehouses for storage only. During the debate Richardson moved and Oliver seconded an amendment declaring the principle of the free right to buy and sell grain through any kind of warehouse that might be considered suitable. The amendment was lost, but Oliver and Richardson continued the fight for flat warehouses which would handle the farmers' grain direct to the railway. (117) During the actual grain blockade caused by an unusually big crop and inadequate railway facilities, Oliver was active both inside and outside the House denouncing the shortcomings of the C.P.R. and the iniquities of railway and grain elevator monopoly.

When the Western Standards Board scandal was before the public, Oliver and the Bulletin were foremost among the critics of the Board, alleging that a combine existed amongst a number of the principal grain-dealing firms in Winnipeg, that this combine was represented on the Board, and that the combine had used this representation improperly

(117) Edmonton Bulletin, June 15, 1900; June 18, 1900.

to establish standards on Alberta oats. (118) During a House debate on the grain blockade and the alleged combine in the session of 1902, Oliver denounced the combine and defended the North West. Making a strong plea for flat warehouses and direct shipping, he claimed that the combine was "skinning the farmers of the North West today to the extent of from 3 to 10 cents a bushel on their wheat." (119) The railways, maintained financially by Territorial production and trade, should be compelled "to accept grain from anybody who offers it by any means he may choose to offer it." In defence of the North West he added, ". . . in bringing this matter to the attention of the House we are doing it not as sectionalists, but as nationalists . . ." (120)

In the session of 1903 a bill to provide for compulsory voting came before the House. Oliver opposed it, stating, "It is not so much the number of men who go to the polls as it is the intelligence exercised by those who do go." (121) He declared that parliament should not compel the voters to do what the House itself did not do, and referred to an

(118) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 20, 1901; Dec. 23, 1901.

(119) Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 21, 1902. Session report.

(120) Ibid

(121) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 2, 1903.

occasion, "the most important in twenty years, when the House of Commons vote was only 36 on one side and 74 on the other, parliament not being present in half its numbers on that occasion." (122) While considering the possible relationship of the bill to electoral corruption he made this passing reference: "I have been before the electors for twenty years, and I have never paid a dollar directly or indirectly to influence a vote in my favor, nor do I know of a dollar having been paid either directly or indirectly for that purpose." (123)

As Sifton's immigration department continued to pour a stream of settlers into the West, Oliver frequently expressed concern at the results of indiscriminate immigration. He still maintained that the best settlers were those from the eastern provinces, akin to the North West pioneers in intellect, customs and political ideals. Whether writing in the Bulletin or speaking in the House he claimed that the introduction of foreign elements of race, politics and social custom was a bad thing for Canada, and was creating a problem in racial assimilation which threatened the very foundations of western Canadian society. (124)

(122) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 2, 1903. Session report.

(123) Ibid

(124) Edmonton Bulletin, April 8, 1901; May 9, 1902; July 24, 1903. Sessional reports in these issues, and frequent Bulletin comments on immigration 1896-1905.

Although there was a temporary recession following the collapse of the Yukon "boom", Edmonton continued to grow steadily in the early years of the new century. The Saskatchewan River bridge was finally completed, and opened to pedestrian and wagon traffic. Work went forward on the extension of the C. & E. into Edmonton, although with many a dispute and vexatious delay. The extension was built, not by the C. & E., now controlled by the C.P.R., but by MacKenzie and Mann of the Canadian Northern. (125) When the day finally came to effect the actual junction between the C.N.R. Edmonton extension and the C. & E. line, complications arose. The C.P.R. forbade the C.N.R. construction engineer to lift its tracks to make the junction. The news spread. Angry Edmontonians, resolved not to tolerate any further delay on the project, flocked to the spot. A repetition of the "house moving" and "land office" furores was narrowly averted. A bold stroke by the C.N.R. engineer saved the day and the junction was laid. (126) The first C.N.R. train crossed the bridge into Edmonton at 3.45 P.M., Monday, October 20, 1902. It was made up of a Canadian Northern engine, a coach, a box-car and two flat-cars, all

(125) The main C.N.R. line had not yet come through. The C. & E. was still the only line into the Edmonton District.

(126) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 10, 1902.
"Fun at the Junction."

brought up as dead freight from Winnipeg via the C.P.R., to constitute the Edmonton extension's first rolling stock. The Edmonton station was situated just below the site of old Fort Edmonton.

On that October afternoon, when the shrill whistle indicated that "Canadian Northern No. 26" was approaching the bridge from the south through the Mill Creek Ravine, some hundreds of Edmonton citizens gathered along the brow of the hill facing the river. This was the fruition of years of struggle. But the wait had been too long. As the train rolled slowly across the bridge, linking Edmonton with the South, the watching crowd was silent. There was no demonstration of any kind. (127)

Edmonton was now "booming" again, and out to get its full share of immigrants. With a population of 2,675 in the spring of 1901, the Town of Edmonton continued to expand rapidly. (128) The Bulletin, now publishing a daily as well as a twice-weekly edition, contributed its full share in the form of publicity. It offered a continuous fare of articles on the district, "boosts" for adjacent settlements, and information and advice to assist the prospective immigrant. It launched a campaign to encourage Strathcona and Edmonton "to sink their differences and pull

(127) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 24, 1902.

(128) Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 31, 1901. A Bulletin census.

together." (129) On November 7, 1904, Edmonton became a city by ordinance of the North West Assembly. Its incorporation was the occasion for the biggest demonstration and banquet ever staged at the Thistle Rink. (130)

While Frank Oliver assumed a major role in the development of Edmonton during these years, he did not permit local interests to divert his attention from the relations existing between the North West and the Dominion Government.

The struggle for responsible government dominated the political history of the North West during the fourteen years following 1883. However, responsible government, achieved as a practical reality in 1892 and formally conceded in 1897, afforded little mitigation of the North West's financial problems. Nor did it long continue to satisfy the constitutional aspirations of the Territorial Assembly. The years 1900 to 1905 witnessed a resumption of the constitutional battle, this time waged on the issue of North West provincial autonomy.

The part played by Frank Oliver M.P. in the autonomy dispute affords a sharp contrast to that played by Frank Oliver M.L.A. in the fight for responsible government. To understand this contrast, a brief survey of the autonomy question will first be necessary.

(129) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 24, 1902.

(130) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 8, 1904.

The turn of the century marked an era of returning prosperity, and Sifton's immigration policies were happily timed to take full advantage of the expansive forces terminating the long depression. European immigrants, solicited by Sifton's agents, and diverted from the United States by the exhaustion of the American public domain, poured into the Canadian West in an ever-broadening stream.

(131) What this influx meant in added demands on the North West government may well be conceived. The Territorial administration was responsible for public works and education. The dispersion of the settlers over vast areas added immeasurably to the problem of roads, bridges, ferries, schools and the countless other needs of the struggling frontier communities. Municipal organization was not sufficiently developed to take the main burden off the shoulders of the North West government. (132) The administration was not disposed to levy a heavy school and local improvement tax on the struggling pioneer "at a time when the Territorial domain was 'employed for purely Federal purposes', the holdings of various corporations (were) exempt from taxation though enhanced in value by local improvements, and the Dominion grant (was) limited to an amount far short

(131) Lingard Territorial Government in Canada pp. 8 - 9.

(132) Lingard, op. cit. Chapter II - The Economic Background to the Demand for Provincial Status.

of the urgent need of the country." (133)

The Territorial government had two sources of revenue, a comparatively paltry local income from licenses and fees, and the annual subsidy from Ottawa. The Dominion grant became yearly less adequate in the face of the ever-growing necessities of the Territories. "Not until 1904, on the eve of the Dominion elections, did the Territorial government actually receive a fair grant." (134)

The public domain in the Territories was still owned and administered by the Federal government "for the purposes of the Dominion". Over a period of years Ottawa had given away millions of acres of North West lands through its free homestead, generous immigration and lavish railway policies. The "land-lock", inseparable from Dominion lands policy, increased the dispersion of settlement and aggravated the financial and administrative difficulties of the Territorial government. Federal provision for tax exemption on railway and colonization grants lost the North West thousands of dollars a year in local taxes. (135)

Western sentiment in favor of provincial autonomy was the result of a gradual growth over a period of seven years, and arose at first out of the conditions of financial stringency, augmented in the

(133) Lingard, op. cit., p. 13.

(134) Ibid p. 114.

(135) Ibid p. 15.

years 1903-5 by constitutional aspirations. Under provincial status the North West would enjoy the power to amend its constitution, to borrow money for public purposes, to deal with the criminal law, to establish charitable and sanitary institutions such as asylums and hospitals, to charter transportation companies and control public undertakings, and, generally, to administer local affairs in more perfect accord with local needs and desires. In addition, the North West hoped to enjoy the beneficiary rights over the public domain, compensation for lands alienated for federal purposes, and the usual provincial subsidy. (136)

Although as early as 1898 F.W.G. Haultain, Premier of the North West Territories and leader of the autonomy movement, declared that "the time for a change is approaching," it was not until 1900 that the movement for provincial autonomy became vocal. In that year the Territorial Assembly presented to the Dominion Government its memorial urging autonomy. In 1901, following a conference between the North West delegates and a sub-committee of the Privy Council, Haultain submitted a draft autonomy bill to the Federal administration. The draft bill was rejected in a letter from the Minister of the Interior the following year, "because of conditions of population and divergence of opinion in the Territories with respect to the number of provinces." (137) Autonomy was the issue of the Territorial elections of 1902, and the thirty-five members returned to the Assembly were unanimous in support of the move for provincial

(136) Lingard, op. cit., p. 115.

(137) Lingard, op. cit., p. 116.

status. Haultain, quite justifiably, considered this result a mandate from the people to repeat his demand for Federal action, and the Assembly itself twice re-affirmed its autonomy memorial of 1900.

Furthermore, the Moose Jaw Convention of the Territorial Conservative Association in 1903, the Territorial Grain Growers' annual convention of 1902 and 1903, numerous Boards of Trade in the North West, and "nearly all, if not all", the Liberal nominating conventions held in the ten North West federal constituencies in the winter of 1903-04 recorded their approval of the contention that the time had arrived for granting provincial status. (138)

To the repeated communications of the North West Assembly and its Premier, the Prime Minister himself made but two replies, both more evasive than enlightening. (139) At various times, however, Federal officials, including the Minister of the Interior, advanced reasons for delaying the grant of provincial status to the North West. These reasons included the lack of unanimity in the Territories regarding the number of provinces to be created, the expense of autonomy to the North West, the fear that the North West might "mortgage its resources", and the need for further study of the question. (140) Lingard, in his work on the autonomy dispute already quoted, considers that these reasons were

(138) Lingard, op. cit., p. 116. The North West was granted 10 Federal members by the Redistribution Bill of 1903.

(139) Ibid pp. 116-117.

(140) Ibid pp. 156-159. An evaluation of Federal reasons for delaying autonomy.

trivial and evasive, and suggests that the real reason for delay was Laurier's reluctance to face the separate schools issue. (141)

Laurier was, in fact, in an awkward position. The separate schools question was bound to raise its head in any autonomy settlement. Haultain was certain to oppose, on constitutional grounds, any provision for separate schools. Haultain's position, distorted into a religious issue, would have the support of Eastern anti-Catholics. Catholic Quebec, upon which Laurier leaned heavily, would once more become the self-appointed guardian of religious "minority rights" in the North West. The dormant prejudices and passions, not so long since inflamed on the Manitoba separate schools question, would flare up again. The Government, although riding with comparative security on the wave of prosperity, did not dare bring the issue to a head until after the general elections. Meanwhile, to add to its embarrassment, the Conservative opposition adopted the autonomy cause as its own and under the leadership of Robert Borden conducted a vigorous campaign in support of North West provincial status, including North West control of its public lands. Premier Haultain, although a Conservative in

(141) Lingard, op. cit., p. 96 n. 62. The significance of the separate schools issue.

federal politics, was the foremost exponent of non-partisanship in North West government. His part in the Moose Jaw Conservative Convention of 1903, however, gave birth to a charge, assiduously circulated by the Liberals, that he had forsaken the policy of non-partisanship and had set himself to introduce federal party lines into Territorial affairs.

(142) On the eve of the general elections of 1904 the autonomy issue was the shuttlecock of federal party politics. The Prime Minister, confident that he was now past the danger point, promised that "if his government was returned to power, they would immediately enter upon negotiations with a view to dealing with the question of provincial autonomy at the next session of parliament." (143) Laurier's procrastination in facing the issue of provincial status was dictated primarily by political expediency. He was supported in his policy of delay by the four North West Federal members, including Frank Oliver.

(142) Lingard, op. cit., p. 118 ff. The charge was certainly unjust, but proved to be good political capital for the Liberals.

(143) Lingard, op. cit., p. 117. The promise was contained in a letter dated Sept. 30, 1904, in reply to a letter from Haultain dated June 1, 1904. Lingard says, "Doubtless he (Laurier) felt that with the four North West members supporting his policy of delay, he could afford to ignore a communication couched in the form of a demand for the renewal of autonomy negotiations."

Oliver's stand in the autonomy dispute reveals a certain change in viewpoint, but not necessarily inconsistency. The staunch champion of North West rights and responsible government maintained throughout the dispute that the main problem was the financial one. He was found, on various occasions, setting himself against the unanimous claim of the North West Assembly by contending that autonomy was neither a matter of constitutional urgency, nor the object of popular demand in the Territories. His attitude is perhaps open to various interpretations, but appears to have been based primarily on a sincere belief that with responsible government achieved, the constitutional aspirations of the Territorial Assembly were relatively unimportant as compared with the practical terms upon which provincial status might be won. Warning that under circumstances of rapidly increasing population and changing conditions autonomy might well be premature, and that caution and delay were necessary in order to obtain the best financial terms, he maintained that meanwhile North West grievances were being ameliorated by increasingly adequate grants, greater representation in the House of Commons, better transportation facilities (the C.N.R. and the G.T.P.), and the increased powers given to the Territorial Legislature in 1903. His supporters praised him for clear-headed realism, and his critics accused

him of subordinating the interests of the North West to the dictates of party loyalty. It does seem evident that with advancing maturity he tended to lay less emphasis on constitutional theory and more upon the problems of practical politics and administration. (144)

In 1894, after expressing satisfaction with the achievement of practical responsible government, Oliver set as the next Territorial objective increased federal subsidies for the North West. (145) He continued to fight for higher subsidies, both as a member of the Assembly and of the House of Commons. Financial considerations were predominant in his opposition to "premature" autonomy, and to the creation of two provinces in the North West. (146) Replying to an article in the Regina Standard on "One Province or Two?" he declared himself unfavorable to division at present. "If we want the largest measure of efficiency at the smallest expense, we must wait for a larger population and correspondingly larger revenues before demanding the doubling of expenses of local government." (147)

In the House debates on Territorial subsidies in 1902, Oliver reminded the administration that it was still not

(144) *Supra* p. 198 n. (33)

(145) *Edmonton Bulletin*, Oct. 8, 1894.

(146) This was in 1901. He later modified his view regarding the number of provinces.

(147) *Edmonton Bulletin*, Nov. 4, 1901.

providing sufficient revenue for the widely scattered and expanding North West, and that the Territorial government had approached the Dominion repeatedly in recent years, and most formally in 1901, asking for a definite financial arrangement "based upon the terms of confederation as applied to the different provinces." He did not advocate autonomy, but argued that "this Parliament and government are required either to meet the conditions that exist by an adequate vote, or else to put the Territories in the position of the several provinces of the Dominion as regards financial arrangements." Mentioning immigration and the problems of education and public works, he added, "I hope that the Government will see that the public services of the North West Territories are not starved at this critical stage in our history." (148) However, "when asked to declare whether or not he considered that the Minister of the Interior gave sufficient reasons for refusing provincial institutions to the Territories, (149) (he) declined to answer the questions put to him and merely stated his readiness to discuss the subject when the government introduced an autonomy bill." (150)

(148) Debates, House of Commons, Canada 1902 Vol. II
Cols. 3072-3. (Hereafter referred to as
Debates, H. of C. Canada.)
 See also Edmonton Bulletin, April 28, 1902.

(149) Supra p. 306.

(150) Lingard, op. cit., p. 56.

In 1902 Conservative support of autonomy was raising the whole question of "who was for and who was against."

Oliver's support (of autonomy) depended upon the terms. If the Territories could get better financial arrangements as a province, then he would support provincial organization, but if they could not get a satisfactory financial arrangement as a province, he would prefer that they remained as they were until they could get it. (151)

When the Conservatives actually embodied their support of Territorial provincial status in Borden's autonomy motion of 1903, (152) the North West Federal members were obliged to declare their stand on the question. They counselled delay. (153)

(151) Edmonton Bulletin, May 2, 1902. Session report from the Ottawa correspondent.

(152) Debates, H. of C. Canada, 1903 Vol. VI Cols. 13856-83.

(153) Lingard, op. cit., p. 96 n. 62 considers the government's delay due to its reluctance to deal with "the dangerous separate schools question."

Lingard, op. cit., p. 96 also states, "The Territorial Assembly was unanimously in favor of autonomy at the earliest possible moment, while the North West representatives at Ottawa were on record as favoring indefinite delay. In advising a policy contrary to the representations of the North West Assembly and Government, Messrs. Scott, Oliver, Davis and Douglas left themselves open to the charge of submitting to the decision of the Liberal caucus, thereby stultifying the demands of the people whom they represented."

Oliver's stand was quite consistent with his past emphasis on financial terms.

Frank Oliver assured the House that the Territories were not "in the state of excitement in regard to provincial organization" which the opposition appeared to imagine. "They will find," said he, "that with fair treatment in the matter of subsidy, the people will be satisfied, whatever the politicians may be" He added that if Parliament would give the North West the terms asked for in the Haultain draft bill (of 1901), he would support it most strongly, but for the present he held that the increased grant was "entirely satisfactory". What the Territories wanted at the present time, he submitted, was adequate financial assistance. (154)

"It is a fair matter for consideration," Oliver stated in the House, "whether we should press an immediate and urgent demand upon this parliament for provincial organization, or, with the prospect of still larger and very rapid increase of population, whether we should wait until that increase of population should give us still better terms." (155)

During the period of the autonomy dispute, Oliver, despite reiterations of independence, was undoubtedly growing closer to the Liberal party. Following the session of 1902 the Edmonton Young Men's Liberal Association tendered him

(154) Lingard, op. cit., p. 87. Referring to Debates, H. of C. Canada, Vol. VI Cols. 13887-96 (1903).

(155) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 12, 1903. Quoting Oliver in the House on the autonomy question.

Further expressions of opinion:

Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 10, 1903. The Oliver-Scott meeting at Regina.

Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 18, 1903.

Lingard, op. cit., p. 103 - Oliver's opinions in press interviews; p. 105 - Edmonton Bulletin versus the Macleod Gazette.

an elaborate banquet. Guests for the occasion included Walter Scott, M.P. (Assiniboia West), and the Hon. A.L. Sifton, M.L.A., Minister of Public Works in the North West administration. (156) Compliments were exchanged freely. Various speakers commended Oliver's record in the House, and credited him with the growing appreciation of western problems evident in the East. In reply he stated that the current prosperity was not the outcome of chance, but of realistic policies, good management, and the leadership of Wilfred Laurier. At the same time, "He reminded his friends that he had been elected as an independent liberal, but did not wish anyone to think he was any less liberal because independent, or any less independent because a liberal - the term liberal meant progressive." (157) This banquet, seeming to associate Oliver very closely with the Alberta Liberal Association and with the Liberal stalwarts Scott and Sifton, was the occasion for an article in the Toronto Telegram headed "The Return of the Prodigal". The article implied that Oliver had left the paths of independence for

(156) Walter Scott, M.P. - Oliver's colleague in the House, and later the first premier of Saskatchewan, heading a Liberal administration.
 Hon. A.L. Sifton, M.L.A. - Highly esteemed by Oliver (Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 23, 1897.); Rutherford's successor as Liberal premier of Alberta.

(157) Edmonton Bulletin, July 28, 1902.

the yoke of "machine Liberalism" and continued:

Independence loses a great deal in the loss of Frank Oliver. Mr. Oliver is the one politician of real and unusual power who is elected by either party west of Lake Superior. Some of his articles in the Edmonton Bulletin, and some of his speeches at Ottawa, have been really strong and brilliant examples of close and powerful editorial and parliamentary reasoning.

The machine liberalism which hounded R.L. Richardson out of parliament is quite capable of cutting Frank Oliver's throat. (158)

The Bulletin, "more in sorrow than in anger," denied the Telegram's interpretation of the affair. What more natural, it enquired, than a Liberal banquet to fete Alberta's M.P.? And why should not his friend Sifton and his House colleague Scott attend? (159) Shortly afterward at Calgary, the Alberta Liberal Association convention, with Sifton presiding, declared its unwavering loyalty to Laurier and "continued confidence in our present member Frank Oliver and appreciation of the ability and sturdy integrity exhibited by him as our representative in the House of Commons." (160)

Late in 1903 the western Liberals began actively preparing for the next general election. Under the Redistribution Bill, Alberta was now divided into four federal constituencies of which Edmonton was one. In December the Edmonton

(158) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 22, 1902. Quoting the Toronto Telegram.

(159) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 22, 1902.

(160) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 8, 1902.

Liberals nominated Oliver for re-election. At a meeting of Liberals and Oliver supporters following the nomination, C.W. Cross, President of the Young Liberal Association, referred to current rumors that Oliver was to be offered a senatorship. This, he said, was just what the Conservatives wanted, but Oliver had no intention of ending his usefulness to the West by taking a seat in the Senate. He was too badly needed in the House of Commons, and there he was going to stay. (161)

The rumors of a senatorship being widely circulated at this time were no doubt encouraged by a recent serious illness which Oliver had undergone. (162) For a time it was feared that his health would no longer permit him the arduous career of a western M.P. However, his remarkable resilience was not only mental but physical. He was a long way indeed from giving up the hurly-burly of western politics and retiring into the obscurity of the Senate.

The big opening gun was fired in the Edmonton federal campaign in August of 1904. Over 250 key Liberals and Oliver supporters from all over Northern Alberta attended a mammoth banquet at the Thistle Rink tendered by the Young Men's Liberal Association. Laurier was unable to accept an

(161) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 24, 1903.

(162) Edmonton Bulletin, June 1, 1903.

invitation to attend, but wrote the secretary of the Association, "I am sorry that my legislative duties will not permit me to avail myself of this opportunity to testify to the high appreciation in which all members of the Liberal party hold Mr. Oliver." (163) Addressing his adherents Oliver claimed the name of an independent liberal: "He was a Liberal in principle and practice but claimed to be independent of the dictates of any political party. He was a Liberal because he believed the policy and principles of the Liberal Party were in the best interests of the country." (164) He declared his support of Liberal tariff and railroad policies, commending particularly the G.T.P. and C.N.R. deals which would bring railway competition to the West. His failure to raise the autonomy question on this important occasion foreshadowed the government campaign policy in the Territories. Laurier, without being specific as to terms, gave assurance that autonomy would be dealt with at the first session of the new parliament if he were re-elected. The government could not let Borden's autonomy campaign in the Territories go altogether unchallenged, and most of the North West Liberal nominating conventions approved the early establishment of provincial status. Yet

(163) Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 20, 1904.

(164) Ibid

throughout the campaign the North West Liberals stressed the G.T.P. deal, rather than autonomy, as the great issue before the people. (165)

A fine piece of election strategy was the arrival in Edmonton late in August of a large party of top-ranking G.T.P. officials. Warmly welcomed and elaborately entertained, the railway men were shown the land and resources of the district. Oliver himself played a leading part in the affair, driving a group of the visitors out to Stony Plain. The Bulletin publicized the visit enthusiastically. (166) The issue of the election, the paper stated, was the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. (167)

The Conservatives nominated Richard Secord, who had served in the Territorial Assembly, to contest the Edmonton riding. At a public meeting in Edmonton early in October Oliver outlined his platform. The Liberal party, he contended, had brought prosperity to the West, and its immigration policy was a wise one capably administered with evident good results. (168) He stressed the progress of the Edmonton district itself under the Liberal regime. Commending

(165) Lingard, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

(166) *Edmonton Bulletin*, Aug. 25, 1904.

(167) *Edmonton Bulletin*, Oct. 3, 1904.

(168) *Edmonton Bulletin*, Oct. 8, 1904. Mention was not made at this time of the Galicians, nor of the "indiscriminate" immigration encouraged by Sifton's Department.

the government policy of railway development with competition, he praised the G.T.P. as contrasted with the C.P.R. monopoly of the Conservatives and reminded his audience that Borden had threatened to repudiate the G.T.P. if elected. Regarding autonomy, he called attention to the government's generous North West grants and declared briefly, "If autonomy can be secured on terms that are better than we now receive, we want it; if not, we can afford to wait." (169)

Premier Roblin of Manitoba, touring the West on behalf of the Conservative candidates, spoke at a mammoth meeting in Edmonton's Thistle Rink. In response to an invitation from the Conservatives Oliver hurriedly interrupted his Stony Plain campaign to take the platform along with the opposition speakers. When he found that his speech was sandwiched between that of Secord and Roblin, he enlivened the meeting with charges of Conservative unfairness and misleading representations. As invited speaker, he maintained, he should be accorded the privilege of speaking last, or at least of having an opportunity to refute Roblin. Charges and counter-charges, in which the audience freely participated, flew thick and fast. But it was, after all, a Conservative meeting, and the opposition won the day. Oliver, following Secord on the platform, stressed the G.T.P. as the big issue

and then had to content himself with listening to Roblin's attack on the Liberals without the chance of speaking in rebuttal. There was, however, some recourse. The Bulletin report of Roblin's speech was written in a fine vein of irony. (170)

The Bulletin featured the railway question in a series of front-page editorials and articles:

A government owned railway or a railway owned government? (171)

Vote for Oliver and break the C.P.R. monopoly! (172)

A vote for Oliver is a vote for a second trans-continental railway built as quickly as men and money can do it, with Edmonton a divisional point on the main line! (173)

VOTE FOR OLIVER AND THE RAILWAY.

Break the C.P.R. Monopoly!

Free your children from the octopus which has reaped the reward of your labors! (174)

Territorial Premier Haultain also toured the West in support of the Conservative cause, and shortly after the Roblin visit he spoke at various points in the Edmonton area. The Bulletin, heading a Haultain meeting at Fort Saskatchewan, "Territorial Premier takes the stump for Secord," charged

(170) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 13, 1904.

(171) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 18, 1904.

(172) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 21, 1904.

(173) Ibid

(174) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 26, 1904.

that "Haultain admits that the terms are the issue, but condemns Oliver for demanding terms before accepting autonomy."

(175)

At his Thistle Rink meeting late in October, Haultain made an impassioned plea for autonomy and accused Oliver of "not being loud enough in the House of Commons on behalf of larger Territorial grants." Oliver countered with the suggestion that Haultain was raising the autonomy issue to keep attention diverted from Borden's railway policy, and restated that he was against "autonomy now" unless the terms were very favorable. (176)

Keeping the railway issue alive, the Bulletin stated more emphatically than grammatically, "Mr. Borden has not and dare not pledge himself to construct and operate a transcontinental railway as a government enterprise." (177) Secord was accused of promising that if the Conservatives won, Edmonton would be the capital of the new province. The Bulletin was pleased to publish Haultain's denial that he had ever discussed the question with Secord. (178)

R.B. Bennett, billed by the Bulletin as a "lone-star attraction", spoke at the Thistle Rink in support of Secord.

(175) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 25, 1904.

(176) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 27, 1904.

(177) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 28, 1904.

(178) Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 31, 1904.

"A descending scale," the Bulletin jibed - first Roblin; then Haultain, "riding the hobby-horse of provincial autonomy;" and now, Bennett. The Bennett meeting, restricted to Secord speakers only, drew the further remark, "Confidence must have indeed sunk to a low ebb when the silver-tongued spellbinder from the ambitious city (179) follows the illustrious example of the windy premier of the blizzard province (180) and declines discussion." (181)

On the Dominion-wide front the Liberals were successful in keeping public attention focussed on the G.T.P. Their plan of a second transcontinental appealed to the growing Canadian national spirit. An autonomy settlement, promised by both parties "after the election", raised no vigorous interest in the East. Haultain's draft bill contained no direct reference to the school question, and Laurier had been careful to say nothing on this touchy subject. The contentious school clause in the autonomy bills lay as yet in the future. Even in the West, expanding, confident and railway-hungry, the G.T.P. took precedence over provincial status. Laurier was at the height of his power and the country was riding high on a wave of unprecedented prosperity and expansion.

(179) Bennett of Calgary.

(180) Roblin of Manitoba.

(181) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 1, 1904. The reference is to the Roblin meeting, *supra* p. 319.

The election, a sweeping Liberal win, strengthened the Government by eleven seats in the Commons. Borden himself failed to hold his seat. In the West seven Liberals were returned, and three Conservatives.

Frank Oliver shared in the Liberal victory, defeating Secord by a majority of over 2000 votes. (182) Climaxing a tumultuous election day, "a surging and enthusiastic crowd numbering thousands" thronged Edmonton's Jasper Avenue and watched the incoming returns flashed on a screen from a window of the Liberal committee rooms. About 9.30 o'clock in the evening, with Oliver's election certain, an immense torchlight procession complete with brass band and madly cheering citizens moved along the Avenue, halting in front of the Queen's Hotel to applaud the Liberal speakers gathered there. Oliver, after delivering an impressive and moving address of thanks to his supporters, was escorted home in state by the crowd. (183)

The Liberal triumph in the Territories may be attributed to a combination of favorable circumstances and clever strategy.

The autonomy question in the North West appeared to have exercised comparatively little influence

(182) Can. Parl. Guide, 1905, p. 170.
 Edmonton (Created 1903)
 Frank Oliver Lib. 3535
 Richard Secord Cons. 1526

(183) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 5, 1904.

on the public mind. Apparently Sir Wilfred Laurier's pre-election promise that the question would receive the attention of Parliament in its first session, coupled with the comparatively liberal financial grants for 1904 and 1905, and the government's Grand Trunk Pacific project together with the claim of the Liberal press and speakers in the West that with Mr. Borden's return to power the prompt construction of the new road would be most improbable, had a predominating effect on the result. According to Conservative contention, the government's control over the foreign vote - through Liberal control of every newspaper in the Territories using a foreign language - and the influence of their agents in convincing the foreigner of the danger of losing his land if the Conservatives were elected, greatly contributed to the Liberal successes in the outlying constituencies. (184)

No sooner had the general elections determined that Laurier, rather than Borden, would have the task of establishing provincial status for the North West, than a large section of the Territorial press, including the Bulletin, began to question the fitness of the Haultain government to negotiate the autonomy settlement. The western Liberal "case against Haultain" was based on three main points: his part in the Moose Jaw Convention of 1903, the capital grant question, and the electoral strength of the North West Assembly in 1905.

The Moose Jaw Convention "carried by a large majority a

(184) Lingard, op. cit., p. 111. Based on Hopkins, C. The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs Toronto 1904 pp. 242-3.

Lingard appears sympathetic to Haultain's fight for autonomy, and correspondingly unsympathetic to Oliver as "a counsellor of delay". ". . . the North West members at Ottawa must share with the Dominion Government the responsibility for delay in granting autonomy." (Lingard, op. cit., p. 124.)

resolution to run the next Territorial elections on party lines and to place a Conservative candidate in every constituency." (185) Haultain accepted the post of Honorary President of the Conservative Association, but warmly opposed the resolution "by speech and vote, and refused to be bound by it." (186) Nevertheless, his connection with the Convention and his subsequent election tour of 1904 in support of Borden led to the charge, of which the Liberals made political capital, that he had indeed renounced his position of non-partisanship and had definitely introduced "federal partyism" into Territorial politics. (187)

In 1903 the Government placed at the disposal of the North West administration a capital advance of \$250,000 to cover the cost of "approved public works". The implications involved in the giving and in the use of this grant were complex, and need not be discussed in detail here. Haultain maintained that any expenditure from the grant was inadvisable, inasmuch as the grant really constituted a

(185) Lingard, op. cit., p. 118.

(186) Ibid p. 118.

(187) Haultain had a clear 14-year record as leader of a "non-party" Territorial government. It was common for Assembly Members to take a party stand in federal politics and to participate in Dominion elections. Lingard, op. cit., p. 117 ff., supports Haultain's contention that his part in the Moose Jaw Convention had not compromised his non-partisanship in Territorial affairs.

Territorial debt, that it involved a degree of federal control, and that its acceptance would compromise the Territorial claim for higher subsidies and provincial autonomy. (188)

In regard to the electoral strength of the Territorial Assembly in the autumn of 1904, there were seven vacant seats in the Legislature. These vacancies had been created by Assembly members resigning to contest federal seats in the general elections of 1904.

Reviewing Haultain's position on the eve of the autonomy settlement, "The Edmonton Bulletin argued that the North West government had no assurance, in view of the 'turn the Premier (had) given Territorial politics' and the seven vacant seats in the Assembly, that it represented either a majority of the people or of the local members in the important question shortly to be decided." (189) In an article on the coming Territorial bye-elections, the Bulletin referred to Haultain's part in the Moose Jaw Convention and to "his refusing the projected \$250,000 capital grant, in order to discredit the Liberal government." (190) Further reference was shortly made to "the assumption, not to say

(188) Lingard, *op. cit.*, p. 90 ff. The Territorial Assembly was unanimous with Haultain that it was inadvisable to touch the capital advance, "until the just demands of the Territories had been satisfactorily met."

(189) Lingard, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-2.

(190) *Edmonton Bulletin*, Nov. 10, 1904.
See also, the Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 21, 1904.

presumption, of Premier Haultain in refusing to accept the \$250,000 offered by the Dominion government for expenditure on North West roads, and his evident willingness to use the question of provincial autonomy for Conservative purposes."

(191)

Edmonton's seat in the North West Assembly had been vacated by Richard Secord to contest the federal riding against Oliver. A nominating convention, Liberal in make-up if not in name, was held in December, 1904, to select a candidate for the impending Edmonton Territorial bye-election. Oliver acted as convention chairman, and C.W. Cross, (192) a prominent Liberal who referred to himself as an "Oliver man", received the nomination. (193) The Bulletin editorially commended the convention's choice. (194) Apparently the policy laid down by the Conservatives at the Moose Jaw Convention cut both ways.

With the opening of the first session of the newly elected parliament early in January, 1905, Laurier, true to his pre-election promise entered into autonomy negotiations with

(191) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 30, 1904.

(192) Later a member of Rutherford's Alberta Cabinet, and in the years following the fall of the Rutherford government, one of Oliver's bitterest political enemies.

(193) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 5, 1904.

(194) Edmonton Bulletin, Dec. 8, 1904.

the North West Government. Simultaneously in Alberta, sectional ambitions, already smoldering through years of the autonomy dispute, burst into violent flame in "the battle of the Capital."

Early in the negotiations rumors were current of a Cabinet decision to establish two provinces, Saskatchewan and Alberta, rather than the one administrative area advocated by Haultain. Calgary and Edmonton were, of course, the two chief contenders for capital honors in Alberta. Delegations from these two centres were soon in Ottawa urging their respective claims, while at home their local press engaged in a violent and wordy warfare. Other aspirants, although smaller, were no less vociferous. Lethbridge entrusted its case to a delegation; Medicine Hat and Red Deer deluged the government with telegrams and letters. In February, Calgary, fearing itself prejudiced by its Conservative record, and perhaps evaluating Frank Oliver's influence with the administration, proposed that Banff, a "neutral" town, be chosen capital. Rural editors in the areas surrounding the contestants threw their weight into the struggle, and for weeks the larger and more vital issues of autonomy were all but lost sight of in the fight for sectional advantage. (195)

(195) Lingard, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-4.
 Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 30, 1905; Feb. 7, 1905;
 Feb. 11, 1905; Feb. 14, 1905; Feb. 22, 1905;
 Mar. 3, 1905.
 Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 8, 1905. - A few towns retained some sense of humor amidst the mad scramble for Capital honors.

The North West Territories were "the creature of the Dominion Government," (196) and as such had no legal right to be a party in the autonomy negotiations. Nevertheless, up to a point, the government was willing to concede the moral right of the North West to present its case to the Cabinet as the autonomy bills were shaped. (197) Premier Haultain and his "silent partner" (198) G.H.V. Bulyea (199) met with the Cabinet frequently from January 5 to February 20. The basis of discussion was Haultain's draft bill of 1901. Three main propositions, ultimately settled contrary to the wishes of Haultain and the Territorial Assembly, must be mentioned. Haultain, supported by the North West Government, advocated one province, provincial control of public lands and resources, and omission from the bills of an educational clause. (200)

Concurrent with Haultain's meetings with the Cabinet, Laurier held a series of conferences with the North West Liberal members of both Commons and Senate. (201) The North

(196) By the Rupert's Land Act, 1870; and by the series of North West Acts of 1875, 1888, etc.

(197) Lingard, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

(198) *Ibid* p. 132 n. 18.

(199) First Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta.

(200) Lingard, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

(201) Haultain claimed that Laurier consulted the N.W. Liberals much more than he did Haultain himself. (Lingard, *op. cit.*, p.132.)

West Liberals also met several times with the Territorial representatives. It will appear that the Prime Minister gave more weight to the representations of the North West Liberal members than he did to those of the Haultain government.

On February 21, 1905, Laurier introduced the autonomy bills in the House. The terms included the creation of two provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, with Edmonton and Regina as their respective capitals; (202) Dominion control of the public lands and resources of the new provinces, with financial compensation; and an educational clause guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities in the new provinces. The first two of these provisions led to considerable contention both inside and outside the House, but it was the educational clause that provoked a sectional animosity reminiscent of the Manitoba separate schools crisis, and for a time threatened the life of the Government.

Education in the Territories had witnessed a gradual evolution from sectarian schools toward a national school system. The North West Territories Act of 1875 "empowered the Territorial authorities to pass the necessary ordinances in respect of education, and secured to the minority of the rate-payers, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, the right

(202) This choice of Capital in each province was made subject to the approval of the first duly elected Legislative Assembly after the formal erection of the province.

to establish separate schools in any district or lesser portion, along with the obligation of paying such rates as they might 'impose upon themselves in respect thereof.'"

(203) In effect the Act of 1875 provided for the development of a sectarian school system. The North West school ordinances and regulations of the years that followed created the Territorial school system, at the same time "gradually 'watering down' the rights conferred on the Roman Catholic minority by the Dominion Parliament in 1875"

(204) By 1901 the North West had a close approach to a national school system. The school ordinance of that year, although providing as usual for minority schools of either Protestant or Catholic persuasion, ensured for both the same privileges and same method of government; and uniformity as to teachers' qualifications, professional training, course of studies, inspection and departmental examinations. "The Haultain government had legislated for uniformity and had 'administered' most of the separatism out of the school law." (205) Except for the Catholic clergy and a few extremists, the North West was satisfied with its school system. (206)

(203) Statutes of Canada 39 Vict., c 49 s 11 (1875).
Lingard, op. cit., p. 155.

(204) Lingard, op. cit., p. 156.

(205) Lingard, op. cit., p. 159.

(206) Lingard, op. cit., Chapters XII and XIII, *passim*.

The actual school clause presented by Laurier in the House on February 21 came as a surprise, not only to large sections of the public, but to many of the Prime Minister's colleagues as well. It provided, not for a continuation of the North West school system as it existed, but for a return to the sectarian system implicit in the North West Territories Act of 1875. Protestant Ontario loosed a flood of denunciation. Haultain and numerous "provincial rights" groups, both Liberal and Conservative, attacked the clause on grounds of constitutionality, claiming that the Dominion Government had no right to impose on the new provinces any educational limitations other than those implicit in the B.N.A. Act. The seven North West Liberal members, who during their discussions with Laurier had been left to assume that any educational clause included would perpetuate the existing school system, protested vigorously.

Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, who had been absent in the United States during the drafting of the bills and Laurier's presentation of them in the House, returned to Ottawa on February 23. Expressing surprise at the introduction of the bills during his absence and voicing strong dissent from the school clause, he resigned from the Cabinet on February 27. He was immediately accorded the support of the Manitoba and North West Liberal members in

pressing for a modification of the school clause. (207)

Popular clamor, particularly in the East, increased in violence. Laurier found himself subjected to criticism from many sides - Haultain and the Territorial government, the dissentient section within the Liberal Party, the Conservative opposition, and pressure groups throughout the country. On March 3 the western Liberals presented to the Prime Minister, practically as an ultimatum, a draft clause of three sub-sections suggested by Sifton as an alternative to the original school clause. The most significant part read:

In and for the Province the Legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education, subject and according to the following provisions:

1. Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to separate schools which any class of persons have at the date of the passing of this Act, under the terms of Chapters 29, 30 and 31 of the Ordinances of the North West Territories passed in the year 1901. (208)

Laurier was forced to retreat. The substance of the above draft clause was incorporated in the educational clause of the autonomy bills as finally passed, guaranteeing the new provinces, not a return to sectarian schools, but a perpetuation of the North West school system as it existed under the ordinances of 1901.

(207) Sifton, as a member of the Greenway government, had played a prominent part in Manitoba's battle against the Dominion on the separate schools issue of the 'nineties.

(208) Lingard, op. cit., p. 183.

Haultain, the Conservative opposition, and numerous provincial rights groups continued to attack the clause as a contravention of provincial constitutional rights. The western Liberal members, including Oliver, appear to have been more concerned with the practical than with the constitutional aspects of the question. They considered the system of 1901 "the best possible" with all factors taken into account, and as the one least likely to lead to religious discord. The reception accorded the autonomy settlement by western opinion largely justified their stand. (209)

The North West Liberal group also supported the creation of two provinces and Dominion control of the public lands and resources of the two provinces. This stand involved, for at least some of the Territorial members including Scott and Oliver, the reversal of an earlier opinion.

Haultain wanted one province; the Laurier government wanted two. Vigorous arguments were advanced by both parties in support of their contention. (210) The North West Liberals may have been influenced by Manitoba's request at this time for an extension of her boundaries north to the Hudson Bay and west to Regina. Although the government did

(209) Lingard, op. cit., Chapter XVII The Reception of the Autonomy Terms by the North West.

(210) Lingard, op. cit., Chapter XIV The Division of the North West Territories.

not favor Manitoba's request, the possibility of an enlarged Manitoba did bring to three the suggested plans for the setting up of provinces in the North West: two provinces, one large province, one smaller province bounded on the east by a Manitoba extended west to Regina. The government was adamant in rejecting the second of these plans. Even the prospect of the third plan being seriously considered was perhaps sufficiently disturbing to influence the western members in favor of two provinces. At any rate, two provinces rather than one involved no contravention of North West rights. To the office-hungry, two administrations and two capitals had their appeal; but Frank Oliver and some of his western colleagues appear to have become sincerely convinced that the unprecedented growth of the West had rendered one large administrative unit inadequate.

Throughout the long years of Conservative government and on into the early years of the Liberal regime, Oliver had advocated North West control of North West lands. Yet in 1905 he took his stand alongside Laurier in supporting Dominion control of the public lands and resources of the new provinces. His support of Dominion control was based not upon constitutional, but upon practical, considerations. He had always charged the Conservatives with mal-administration of North West lands, but he believed that the Liberals were

now administering these lands efficiently, and that only under continued Dominion jurisdiction could the aggressive immigration policy initiated by Sifton be carried forward to its full fruition.

Frank Oliver, Clifford Sifton's successor as Minister of the Interior, stressed the claim that the Dominion Government had a greater interest than the provincial governments in establishing settlers on the lands of the North West. Every family placed on the land in the Territories, contended the Minister, was worth perhaps \$100 per year in Dominion customs and excise revenue, and "absolutely nothing" to provincial revenue. The local government, consequently, could not afford to spend money in attracting settlers. He cited lack of immigration policies in the provinces of British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes, which possessed their lands, as proof of his contention. The interests of the entire Dominion, stated Mr. Oliver, depended upon the settlement of the prairies, and it could not afford to adopt a policy which placed in other hands a responsibility which it was best fitted to discharge. The Dominion alone could afford to give the land away as a means of securing immigration. He believed that the Canadian people at large, through the experience of recent years, had become convinced that the policy of free lands was one for the well-being of the Dominion, and he could not imagine any federal government reversing that policy. In conclusion he stated that, on the other hand, a provincial government cramped for money would be likely to adopt a policy of administration for revenue, which would prove injurious to both the province and the Dominion. (211)

Following the resignation of Clifford Sifton in February, speculation as to his probable successor took second place to the heated controversy over the school clause in the

(211) Lingard, op. cit., pp. 215-6.

autonomy bills. As the weeks passed, however, interest in the impending cabinet appointment increased both in the House and in the press. Walter Scott and Frank Oliver emerged as the two most likely contenders for the vacant portfolio of the Interior. Laurier chose Frank Oliver, and on April 8 the member for Edmonton was sworn of the Privy Council and appointed Minister of the Interior. (212)

Edmonton was, of course, elated. Oliver's appointment, following closely upon the naming of the city as capital of Alberta, (213) was regarded as a second victory. The Bulletin marked the occasion by a front page spread expressing local gratification. Recalling that Walter Scott had been prominently mentioned for the portfolio, the Bulletin stated, "The news (of Oliver's appointment) may be fairly said to have come as a genuine surprise to the public generally, and even to many well informed in political matters." (214) Nevertheless, the paper continued, Edmonton's jubilation "may in fairness be said to have been shared by men of all classes and parties," including prominent Conservatives who had already promised that Oliver would not be

(212) Can. Parl. Guide, 1905 p. 140.

(213) Subject to ratification by the first elected legislature.

(214) Edmonton Bulletin, April 8, 1905.

opposed in the bye-election. (215) Several prominent citizens expressed regret that Oliver had not waited and become premier of the new province. (216)

Press comments on the appointment were numerous and varied. Editors throughout the country discussed freely the probable reasons for Laurier's choice, and the record and capabilities of the new Minister. Characterizing the appointment as "a distinct and direct reward to an independent man" and as a matter of great satisfaction to the West, the Calgary Albertan claimed that in all the Dominion House of Commons no person could have been found more fitted for the portfolio of the Interior. "In all western Canada," the Albertan added, "there has been no more striking figure, no more stalwart champion, no more intelligent exponent of the West. Mr. Oliver is a typical westerner, without frills, ornaments or mysteries." (217)

The Manitoba Free Press, emphasising Oliver's knowledge and understanding of western conditions and his qualifications as a "worthy successor" to Sifton, said, "His career in parliament has made him known to the whole Dominion as an energetic, outspoken representative of this great and

(215) Edmonton Bulletin, April 8, 1905.

(216) Ibid

(217) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11, 1905. Quoting the Calgary Albertan.

important section of the Dominion." (218)

The Toronto Mail and Empire was critical: "He (Oliver) represents a constituency which can be operated upon by the election machine owing to the preponderance of the foreign element. The Oliver scandal (219) serves to show that we have reached the top notch in the matter of corruption." (220) The Toronto News, a bitter opponent of the autonomy bills, came out with a scathing personal and political denunciation of Laurier's new Minister. Claiming that, "There is no more shifty, shuffling and demagogic politician in the House of Commons than Mr. Oliver," the News charged that he was chosen in preference to Walter Scott because the government was afraid to contest Scott's constituency, Assiniboia West, in a bye-election. Edmonton, with its five or six hundred French Catholic voters, numerous Galicians, G.T.P. "pull", and gratification at being the new Alberta capital was an electoral "cinch" for the Liberals. (221)

The Calgary Herald, although less critical of Oliver personally, suggested, "The appointment was wrung from the

(218) Edmonton Bulletin, April 11, 1905. Quoting the Manitoba Free Press.

(219) The Oliver scandal refers to his appointment as Minister of the Interior.

(220) Edmonton Bulletin, April 17, 1905. Quoting the Toronto Mail and Empire.

(221) Edmonton Bulletin, April 20, 1905. Quoting the Toronto News.

Premier by the alarming exigencies of the situation, over which he had no control. He (Oliver) was the only eligible member with a Catholic constituency, so freely sprinkled with a European population as to make his election certain."

(222) The Didsbury Pioneer called attention to "a big Galician vote that will go solid government." (223) The Halifax Chronicle stated, ". . . Mr. Oliver is a particularly able and capable man, one of the very ablest and most capable indeed in the Liberal ranks in Canada, and far more than a match in all respects for any of the known Conservative leaders." (224) In the Vancouver News and Advertiser the Hon. Joseph Martin commended Oliver's integrity and energy and said, "He has never failed incurring the displeasure of his party leaders rather than assent to measures which he believed he ought to oppose." (225)

The Pincher Creek Echo expressed itself as follows:

True, it is hinted that the appointment is one not so much of choice as of necessity; necessity in that it was needful that a western member be placed in the seat of Sifton and then Edmonton being the only safe seat in the West at this particular political crisis, the member from Edmonton

(222) Edmonton Bulletin, April 28, 1905. Quoting the Calgary Herald.

(223) Edmonton Bulletin, April 17, 1905. Quoting the Didsbury Pioneer.

(224) Edmonton Bulletin, April 28, 1905. Quoting the Halifax Chronicle.

(225) Edmonton Bulletin, April 28, 1905. Quoting the Vancouver News and Advertiser.

was Hobson's choice.

. . . one thing remains, that in Frank Oliver, no matter how the portfolio has come to him, it was obtained without dishonesty or underhand wire-pulling on his part, and he will perform his duties as Minister of the Interior fairly and freely with favor or malice toward no man. (226)

The Ottawa Free Press declared that "the choice of Mr. Frank Oliver as Minister of the Interior in succession to Mr. Clifford Sifton has been dictated solely by a regard for what was considered best for the North West at the present juncture." (227)

Oliver arrived in his home city from Ottawa on April 12 to stand for re-election. An enthusiastic non-political reception, staged by the Edmonton City Council and the Board of Trade, greeted him at the Strathcona station. He was conducted to the North Side at the head of an immense parade upwards of a mile in length, and including ornamented floats and over one thousand citizens in carriages. At the evening meeting in the Thistle Rink prominent local men delivered congratulatory speeches. The keynote of popular feeling was best expressed in the Old Timers' Address:

. . . and now that the Territories are about to enter the Confederation of Provinces, it seems to us both fortunate and appropriate that the position

(226) Edmonton Bulletin, April 28, 1905. Quoting the Pincher Creek Echo.

(227) Edmonton Bulletin, April 28, 1905. Quoting the Ottawa Free Press.

of the Minister of the Interior, that member of the government whose chief duties are concerned with the settlement and development of the West, should be filled by one who by actual experience has acquired a knowledge of the work to be performed, and who has himself trod in the hard paths of a pioneer. (228)

While no doubt gratified by the popular welcome accorded him, Oliver lost no time in organizing his bye-election campaign. At a series of public meetings he spoke in defence of his stand on the autonomy bills which were, of course, still before the House of Commons. He admitted having been against "hasty" autonomy because of a doubt as to success in receiving a sufficiently favorable financial arrangement. However, the terms of Laurier's bills were eminently acceptable, he claimed, and had his whole-hearted support. (229) He defended the school clause as amended on the grounds that "these provisions do not create - they merely continue - existing conditions in regard to minority schools. These conditions have prevailed in the Territories since 1892 without objection or protest from any source, and may therefore be considered to be satisfactory to the people concerned." (230)

(228) Edmonton Bulletin, April 14, 1905.

(229) Edmonton Bulletin, April 15, 1905.

(230) Edmonton Bulletin, April 20, 1905. Quite consistent with Oliver's previous stand. He was concerned, apparently, with practical results and not with the constitutional issue raised by the provincial rights groups.

Little reference was made to the "two provinces issue", or to Dominion control of public lands and resources. Edmonton was quite satisfied with two provinces so long as she was to be the capital of one of them, while the lands question was temporarily dwarfed by the generous compensating subsidies offered by the government, and by the prospect of Edmonton's own member taking over the effective immigration machinery created by Sifton. Denying that his appointment was a tactical move dictated by Laurier's dependence on the Edmonton "foreign vote", Oliver lashed out at his critics and accused them of befuddling the issues.

(231) He besought his supporters not to elect him on the basis of material interests that might accrue from his being Minister of the Interior, (232) and promised that the Department would continue a broad programme of western development including the Peace River Country.

A Liberal rally held in the Thistle Rink on April 24 witnessed the largest crowd ever present at a public meeting in Edmonton. (233) Walter Scott was present on the platform and his congratulatory speech was a clever move calculated to remove any suggestion of friction within the party ranks

(231) Edmonton Bulletin, April 15, 1905.

(232) Ibid

(233) Edmonton Bulletin, April 25, 1905.

in connection with Oliver's appointment.

The Edmonton Conservatives, caught in a wave of popular enthusiasm, were at a tremendous disadvantage. The Bulletin claimed that "prominent local members of the party have frequently expressed their intention of supporting Frank Oliver regardless of the wishes of their eastern managers."

(234) Whether or not this claim was entirely valid, the local Conservatives meeting in convention decided not to oppose the Minister of the Interior in the bye-election.

(235) With almost certain defeat staring them in the face they had little alternative.

The Liberals widely publicized Oliver's re-election by acclamation as placing the western stamp of approval on the autonomy bills. If, as the opposition charged, Laurier's choice of the new Minister was indeed a tactical move, it was a clever and effective one.

Oliver returned East immediately to participate in the

(234) Edmonton Bulletin, April 18, 1905.

(235) Ibid

Canadian Annual Review, 1905, p. 28: "... the opposition in parliament spent much time and many figures to prove that (Edmonton's) population was made up largely of a foreign element under the thumb of the government officials, and that it would, therefore, be useless to oppose the Minister's re-election - despite the alleged 'anti-coercion' feeling of the West."

remainder of the session, stopping en route at Winnipeg to deliver a brilliant defence of Sifton's immigration policy and the autonomy bills. In reply to the repeated Conservative charge that the education clause violated provincial rights, he justified the school terms as the best possible practical solution of a difficult problem. Omission of the school clause, interpreted as an attempt to assert Protestant domination would, he submitted, arouse the western Catholics and foment useless religious discord. However, "with regard to religious instruction, Mr. Oliver said that personally he was not in favor of having it in the schools."

(236)

During the balance of the session the opposition, embittered by a losing struggle, singled out the new Minister of the Interior for special attention. Conservative speakers continued to brand his appointment as an unscrupulous political move, and to attribute his return by acclamation to Liberal control of Edmonton's "foreign element". To "Oliver's Galicians" were added "Oliver's Catholics". He was, of course, accused of "partyism" and of selling his independence in return for the portfolio of the Interior and Edmonton's selection as capital of the new province. As a veteran political fighter, quite able to take care of

(236) Edmonton Bulletin, May 5, 1905. Free Press report.

himself in the rough and tumble of political debate, he challenged his critics on every issue, and even carried the war into the enemy's camp. (237)

He spoke frequently in the autonomy debates. As Minister of the Interior he had a particular interest in western lands, and warmly defended federal retention of the North West public domain. He was now sincerely convinced that western immigration could proceed efficiently only under Dominion control. Emphasizing that Dominion interest in North West lands and resources was in "the revenue that it can derive from the settler who makes the land productive," he declared:

This Dominion of Canada can make millions out of the lands of the North West, and never sell an acre; it has made millions out of these lands without selling an acre. The increase in our customs, . . . in our trade and commerce, . . . in our manufactures is to a very large extent due to the increase in settlement on the free lands of the North West Territories. The prosperity this Dominion is enjoying today (1905) is to a very large extent due to the fact that the lands of the North West have been given away . . . It is worth the while of the Dominion to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in promoting immigration to that country and to spend thousands . . . of dollars in surveying and administering these lands and then to give them away. (238)

The autonomy bills were passed in the House of Commons on July 5 and in the Senate on July 18. The prorogation

(237) Edmonton Bulletin, May 19, 1905. Report from Ottawa.

(238) Lingard, op. cit., p. 245. From Debates, H. of C., Canada, 1905, Vol. II, Cols. 3157-8.

of Parliament on July 20 marked the end of the prolonged and controversial session noted chiefly for the North West autonomy legislation.

On September 1, 1905, in the City of Edmonton, and in the presence of many of the Dominion's leading political figures including the Prime Minister himself, the formal inauguration of the Province of Alberta took place. (239)

Since the days of the gold rush Oliver had displayed an intense interest in the Yukon, and in the late summer of 1905 he paid a visit to that remote northern region to acquaint himself at first hand with its economic and administrative problems. He returned to Edmonton on September 18, and during the succeeding weeks threw himself into the Alberta elections in support of the newly-formed Alberta Liberal Party. (240)

Meanwhile, on August 24, 1905, the Hon. G.H.V. Bulyea, prominent in Liberal circles, had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the new province, and on September 2 it was

(239) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 1, 1905. The issues of the Bulletin during the first week of September, 1905, carried lengthy reports of the inauguration ceremonies.

(240) Edmonton Bulletin, Sept. 21, 1905. A report of a lengthy interview with Oliver on his trip to the Yukon.

announced that His Honor had called upon Mr. A.C. Rutherford, recent choice of the Liberals in Alberta as their leader, to form a government. The cabinet, gazetted September 9, was made up of the Premier and four ministers including one without portfolio. The provincial elections were set for November 9.

Despite the policy laid down at the Moose Jaw Convention in 1903, there is reason to believe that the Conservatives wished to carry the principle of non-partisanship into the new provincial legislature. They stood at a decided disadvantage in a straight party fight in Alberta. The Liberals held the dominating position. They were the party of autonomy and of the G.T.P., and it was evident that they would constitute Alberta's pre-election administration. They were charged with having gerrymandered the provincial constituencies in their own favor; (241) they were in control of government patronage and, if the Conservatives were to be believed, of the provincial "foreign" press and vote. As early as July the Calgary Herald charged:

The Edmonton Bulletin is resorting to extreme means to arouse those people of the North who prefer a non-partisan government to a sense of their duty to Frank Oliver and the Dominion Government. . . . Those who have interested themselves in securing a non-partisan government for the new province have displayed a patriotic spirit which

(241) Lingard, op. cit., p. 230.

Oliver finds is influencing many people in the North as well as in other parts of the country. (242)

The Liberals played up the Moose Jaw declaration and Haultain's "betrayal" of non-party administration. (243) Certain of success at the polls they declared themselves no longer bound by the non-party tradition, and in convention at Calgary on August 3 they formed the Alberta Liberal Association, drew up a party platform, and threw down the gauntlet to their political opponents. The Conservatives, not to be outdone, convened in Red Deer on August 16 and formed the Alberta Provincial Conservative Association of which R.B. Bennett was chosen president. The Conservative platform stressed "provincial rights", particularly with reference to natural resources and education.

The Liberal position in the campaign was one of attention to the development of Provincial resources and the maintenance of political stability; together with the charge that the opposition was bent upon a disturbing period of race and creed agitation and of constitutional contest in the courts; and the statement that it was led by a representative of corporate interests in general and a friend of the C.P.R. monopoly in particular. The Conservative attitude was one of vehement protest against the province being deprived of educational freedom and control of lands; together with the charge against the Liberal party in Ottawa of gerrymandering the constituencies and, through a partisan Lieutenant-Governor,

(242) Edmonton Bulletin, July 13, 1905. Quoting the Calgary Herald.

(243) Edmonton Bulletin, July 6, 1905; July 7, 1905; July 20, 1905; July 29, 1905; Aug. 4, 1905.

of appointing a government which was entirely under the control of the Federal authorities. Of course, local matters of all kinds, including especially the location of the capital, were mixed up with the wider issues; while farmers' prosperity and the expected railway development had the effect of producing that satisfied feeling which is always so kindly to governments in a general election. The Conservatives also made the charge that all kinds of Dominion government officials and "organizers" were being imported or utilized in the election to aid the Liberals. (244)

Oliver played a leading part in the provincial election campaign, speaking at numerous points throughout the Province. He defended the autonomy terms and made frequent references to the advantages which would accrue from a Liberal victory. At a Thistle Rink meeting just prior to the election he crossed swords with W.A. Griesbach, who years later was to defeat him in the Edmonton constituency.

(245) Griesbach, in criticizing Oliver, referred to him as "the Goliath of Alberta politics". Oliver acknowledged the compliment, but added that in attacking him Griesbach had used, not the weapon with which David slew Goliath, but rather the weapon which Samson used against the Philistines.

(246)

(244) Canadian Annual Review, 1905, p. 239.

(245) Oliver supported Laurier in his opposition to the war time conscription measure of 1917. In Canada's "khaki election" of 1917, Oliver was opposed by Griesbach in the constituency of Edmonton West. Oliver won a majority of the civil votes cast, but lost the seat to Griesbach on the strength of the military votes cast under the provisions of the Military Voters Act, 1917. (Can. Parl. Guide, 1918, p. 236.)

(246) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 7, 1905.

The elections resulted in the return of 23 Liberals and 2 Conservatives to the provincial legislature. The Conservatives unsuccessfully challenged the results in several constituencies, and were quick to point out that the larger issues had been side-tracked by the dispute concerning the location of the capital, and that the "foreign element" had been corrupted by Liberal organizers, some of whom were officials of the Dominion Government. Said the Calgary Herald: "When the totals are all in it will be found that after Oliver's Galicians and Pollocks (sic), who were voted like cattle by the machine, are deducted from the list, there will be a majority of good Canadian electors against the government." (247) The Bulletin expressed its resentment of the "machine" charge as "a gratuitous insult to the electorate" and considered the election results as an adequate answer to Conservative misrepresentation. (248)

Immediately following the election Frank Oliver, "fresh from the scene of the great victory in his own Province of Alberta, where he took an active part in the contest, speaking in all parts of the country," (249) returned East to

(247) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 17, 1905. Quoting the Calgary Herald.

(248) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 10, 1905; Nov. 14, 1905.

(249) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 17, 1905. Quoting the Manitoba Free Press.

assume his duties as Minister of the Interior. Interviewed en route in Winnipeg he stated, regarding the Alberta triumph, "A decisive and overwhelming victory was just what was required to settle the important questions raised during the campaign. No one can hope to raise the school question or racial question again after the answer given by the voters in Alberta last week. The great advancement and growth of our western communities . . . is justly attributed to the work of the Liberal administration." (250)

Oliver's prediction of a strong Liberal victory in Saskatchewan was justified in the December elections. Haultain's forces went down to defeat in a bitterly contested campaign, and the Hon. Walter Scott's Liberals were sustained 16 to 8 in the provincial legislature of 24 members.

For Frank Oliver the year 1905 was one of political and personal triumph. He assumed the practical duties of Minister of the Interior with complete confidence in the future, and with the firm resolve to implement those policies which he had so long advocated for the North West.

(250) Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 17, 1905. Oliver in an interview with the Manitoba Free Press.

A Note on the Career of the Hon. Frank Oliver Subsequent to 1905

The Hon. Frank Oliver served as Minister of the Interior from 1905 to 1911. An energetic and able administrator, he re-organized the Department of Immigration, which under his firm supervision continued an aggressive policy of "settling the West." Long the opponent of "indiscriminate immigration", he was responsible for framing the Immigration Act of 1906, a milestone in Canadian immigration legislation, which drastically modified the policy of Sifton in the direction of restricted and selective immigration. Oliver favored immigrants from the United Kingdom, and to a somewhat lesser degree those from the Scandinavian countries, Holland, Belgium, France and the United States. He was unalterably opposed to Oriental immigration. In the interests of securing "the right kind of settlers" for Canada he paid extensive visits to the British Isles, continental Europe and the United States. Despite the restrictive and selective features of his immigration policy, which did a great deal to raise the quality of workers and settlers being admitted into the country, the six years of his Ministry constituted a period of flood tide in Canadian immigration.

Every branch of the Department of the Interior felt the vigor of his administration. He was responsible for the formulation of many important regulations and enactments relating to western lands, minerals and timber. His notable Land Bill of 1908 featured "land for the settler" and the sale of pre-emptions to finance the building of the Hudson Bay Railway.

For five years Oliver remained the firm friend of the Liberal Government of Alberta which, in 1905, he had assisted on its way into office. In 1910, however, on the issue of the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway, he broke with the Rutherford Government and gave his support to the Liberal administration of the Hon. A.L. Sifton which succeeded it.

The Laurier Government, advocating a policy of reciprocity with the United States, went down to defeat in the general elections of 1911. Oliver's term as Minister of the Interior ended with the resignation of the Administration on October 6 of that year. Although he supported his chief

on the reciprocity issue, Oliver himself survived the general Liberal defeat. In a bitterly contested campaign, enlivened by a first class "family quarrel" among the Alberta Liberals, he successfully defended his seat against W. A. Griesbach (Cons.), by an overwhelming majority.

As a private member, the "stormy petrel" of the House of Commons, he continued to be the unflagging advocate of western interests. Remaining staunchly loyal to Laurier in the troubrous years of the First World War, he denounced the War Times Election Act of 1917 as being identified with an "oligarchic Kaiserism", and opposed the formation of the Union Government. He supported Laurier's stand against conscription, declaring that while calling up the manhood of a nation for military service was right and logical in theory, it was impossible of practice in Canada.

Oliver was defeated in the constituency of Edmonton West in the general elections of 1917 by W.A. Griesbach (Cons.), a determining factor being the military votes cast under the provisions of the Military Voters Act of 1917. This defeat ended his parliamentary career of 21 years. He contested the constituency of Edmonton West again in 1921, but in the face of the rising tide of new farmers' groups in the West, he lost to the Progressive candidate.

In 1933 he was awarded an Honorary L.L.D. degree from the University of Alberta. In 1927 the Old Timers' of Alberta honored him by the unveiling of an Oliver Bust at the Old Timers' Cabin at the Edmonton Exhibition Grounds.

In 1924 he was appointed member of the Board of Railway Commissioners of Canada, retiring from active membership in 1928 at the age of seventy-five. However, he remained with the Board as adviser, acting as special officer on grade separations. He continued "on duty" in Ottawa until his death there on March 31, 1933. He was interred in the City of Edmonton.

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